UNESCO the Courier

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July/August 1999

- REVAMPING ASIA'S SCHOOLS
- HUMANITARIAN INTERVENTION
- WAR COMICS: THE NEW REALISM

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Tourism and culture: rethinking the mix

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Contents

July/August 1999

PEOPLE AND PLACES

3 Dancing with the rivers — Text and photos by Gilles Saussier

EDITORIAL

11 For a new beginning

PLANET

12 The silent casualties of war — Paul Richards and Louise Sperling

15 Colombia: the seeds of return — Leticia Reyes

16 Somalia's bitter harvest — Dan Kiambi

WORLD OF LEARNING

17 Asia takes a crash course in educational reform — Matthew Pennington

FOCUS

21 **Tourism and culture: rethinking the mix**

More and more tourists are visiting monuments and exploring different ways of life. In some cases, the boom in tourism can reinvigorate local traditions. In others, tourist overload is clearly harming host communities. Should culture be protected from tourism? What can be done to foster a mutually beneficial relationship between the two?

Detailed table of contents on page 21.

ETHICS

57 Humanitarian intervention: a controversial right — Olivier Corten

59 The first lessons of Kosovo — Mario Bettati and Olivier Corten

SIGNS OF THE TIMES

61 War comics: the new realism — Antonio Altarriba Ordóñez

CONNEXIONS

65 Morse: the end of an era? — Tony Smith

TALKING TO...

69 Oswaldo de Rivero: debunking the myths of 'development'

Cover: Tourists on the Acropolis, Athens. © Jobard, Sipa press, Paris

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Photos © Gilles Saussier, Paris

Newly emerged grazing land on the north side of Sandwip island in the Bay of Bengal.

DANCING WITH THE RIVERS

Gilles Saussier

Dire poverty has driven some five million Bangladeshis to migrate to "chars", islands that are periodically submerged by the country's mighty rivers

In the space of a single day, their land, home and belongings might be eroded by water, and their livelihood, even their lives, lost. But this does not deter an estimated five million Bangladeshis from settling on chars, temporary alluvial islands made up of sand and layers of silt deposited by the country's three major rivers, the Brahmaputra-Jamuna, the Ganges and the Meghna. "Land is rising and disappearing all the time. I have shifted my home 20 times," says Akbar Ali Khondokar, a 73-year-old man living on the island of Jigatola in the Jamalpur district of northern Bangladesh.

Of the three rivers, the Brahmaputra-Jamuna is the most unpredictable. It changes ▶

Gilles Saussier is a French documentary photographer. These photos and a longer version of the accompanying article appear in his book *Living in the Fringe* (Figura Association, Paris, 1998).

To reach the market place on the mainland, char-dwellers have to walk miles over the dry riverbed of Jamuna river (Tangail district).

Photos © Gilles Saussier, Paris

course constantly, and weaves around the innumerable chars, determining all aspects of life on these islands. In March and April the Jamuna is almost dry, whereas from June onwards the flood season starts and the water level can rise as much as six metres. The average life span of a char is from 10 to 25 years. Once a char is submerged, people settle down on the neighbouring islands and wait for the water to recede. But if the char is fully eroded, months or years may pass before they can go back to it.

Paying taxes on underwater land

In some cases it was several generations ago that the poorest of the poor fled the mainland and opted for a no less uncertain existence on the chars. "Land is fresh and fertile on the char. The harvest is better than on the mainland," says Keru Talukdar, a peasant now settled on the island of Rulipara in Tangail district, central Bangladesh.

There are no precise statistics on the char population of Bangladesh. So precarious is the fate of the chars that there is usually no post office, health centre or even electricity on any of these islands. The char-dwellers depend on boats to commute to the mainland, which can be between two and eight kilometres away.

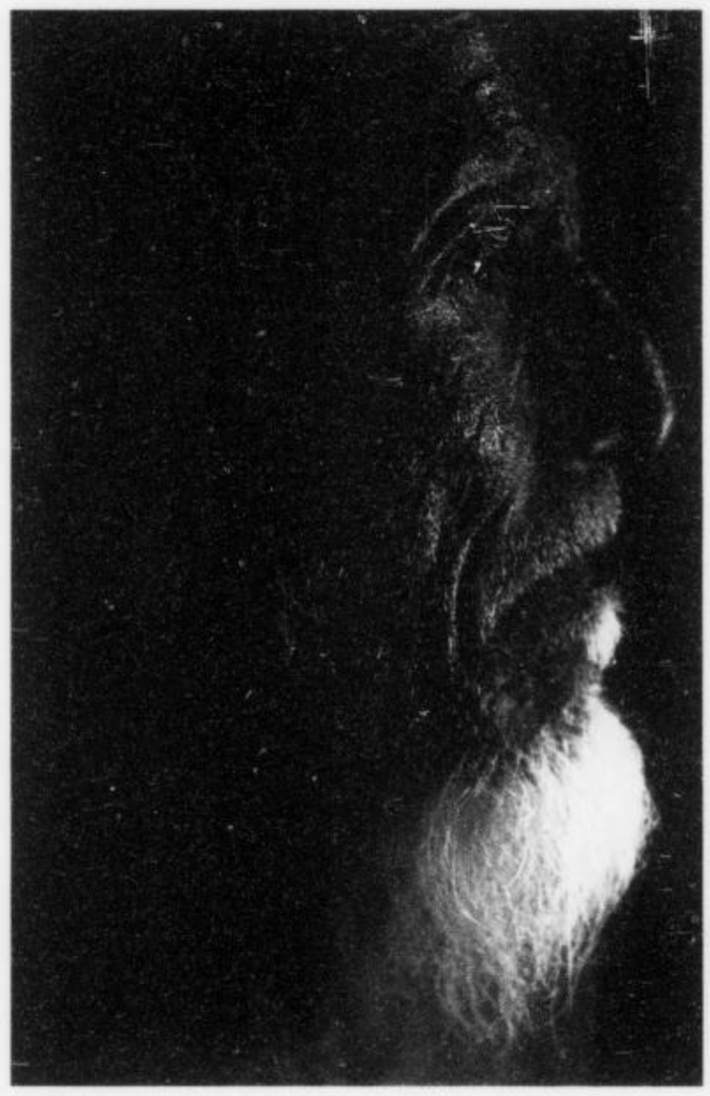
For the char people, land is the main resource but it has no permanent boundaries. They keep property title deeds and even pay taxes for land under water in the hope of cultivating it again one day, once the island re-emerges. Since there is no administration on the islands, the char-dwellers settle land disputes among themselves. On the Jamuna river, they even sell and buy land under water in the hope that it will surface again. For example, the char of Rulipara re-emerged 25 years ago and people continue to live there today.

Human lives, however, are rarely lost on chars along the Jamuna, unlike those on the coastal belt, because dwellers can forecast floods several days in advance by observing weather conditions. The char people constantly keep monitoring the water level and when the river starts to rise during the monsoon season they leave the islands with their belongings and return only after the water recedes.

'Apart from the cyclones, life is sweet on the chars'

Children and the elderly are particularly vulnerable during these times, as problems of storing and cooking food, and of drinking water, can lead to malnutrition and diarrhoea. The dry season also brings trouble: a large part of the river dries up, and travelling between chars or to the mainland becomes extremely difficult over the sandy riverbed. The char-dwellers must walk as many as eight kilometres carrying their produce under the scorching sun. But the char people accept loss and uncertainty as part of their lives. "When at last our houses become decent and the land grows fertile, erosion comes and we have to begin all over again," explains Hayatun, a woman from Rulipara char.

For those living on chars in the Bay of Bengal, the threat comes from the nearby sea. Between 1960 and 1992 no fewer than 12 cyclones devastated the coastal region. The most tragic were in 1970 and 1991 killing respectively 300,000 and 138,000 people. But the char-dwellers take the risk because "The air is healthy. There is enough room to breed cattle. In one year I can eat more fish here than during a whole life on the mainland. Apart from the cyclones, life is sweet on the chars," says Fazlur Rahman who lives on the Dhal char, one of the outermost islands of the Bay of Bengal. ■



Photos © Gilles Saussier, Paris

Barkat Ali Mandol

Gabshara Char,
Bhuapur Thana,
Tangail district

I am 95. I was born on this char. When I was a child many trees grew on the char and it was like the mainland. I went to school naked. We did not wear as many clothes as today; habits were different. The char was eroded when I was between 5 and 7. Since then I have moved my home more than 7 times. The char was more stable when I was young. Until I was 45, I moved only twice. When I was living in the shade of my father, life was very easy. But when I started to live alone, life became very tough. Before we ate our own rice. Now I have to buy rice because of floods and erosion. I lose my harvest almost every year.

COUNTRY INFORMATION

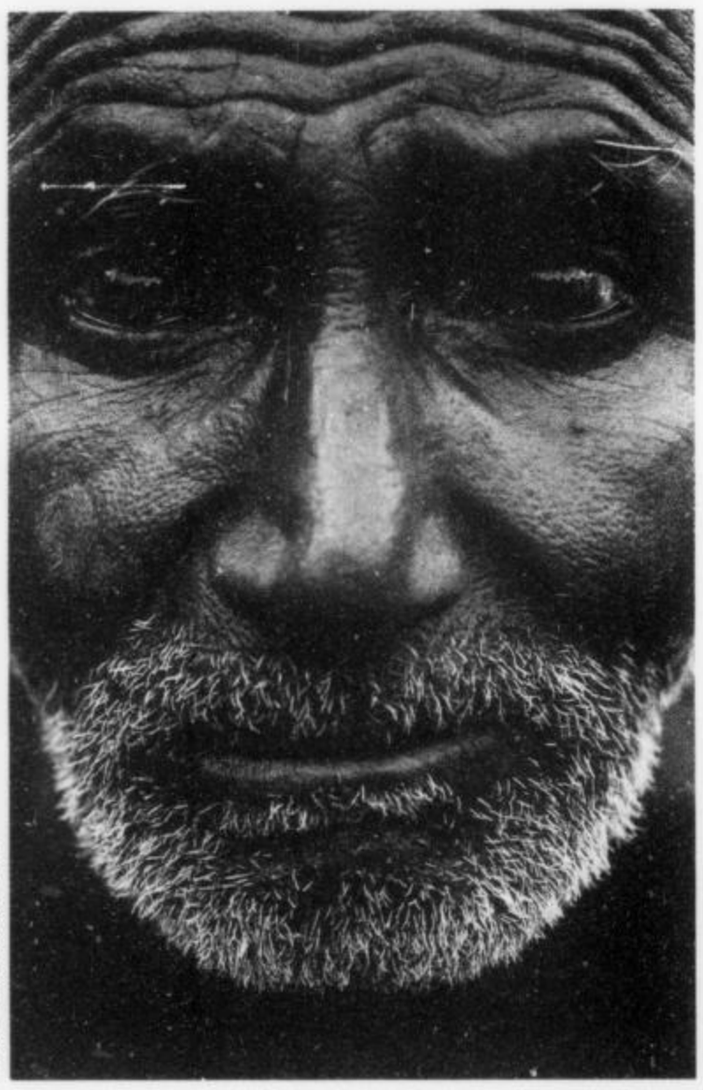
People's Republic of Bangladesh
Capital: Dhaka
Area: 148,393 sq.km
Population: 127.5 million
Languages: Bangla, English and Chakma
Literacy rate: 38.1%
Main Religion: Islam
Currency: Taka (US 1$ = approx. 45 Takas)
Prime Minister: Sheikh Hasina Wazed

● **Useful website**
www.pixup.com/lof.html

Char-dwellers plough newly emerged land on Rulipara island (Tangail district).

A newly settled landless family cooks food on Gazaria island at the mouth of the Meghna estuary (Bay of Bengal).

Photos © Gilles Saussier, Paris



Photos © Gilles Saussier, Paris

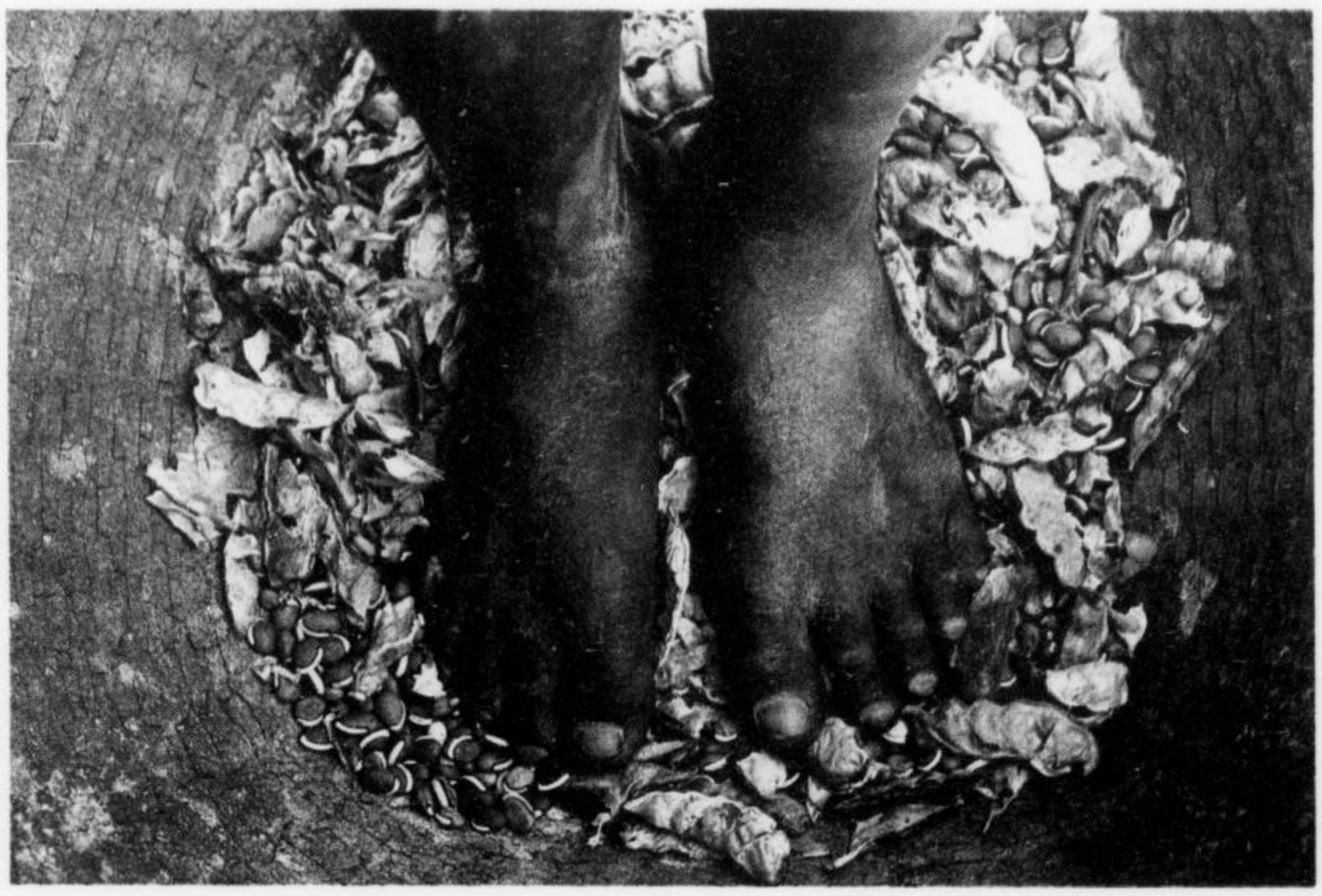
Jotish Chandra Koibarta

Chachra,
Lalmohan Thana,
Bhola district

I am around 60 years old. I was born in Chachra, two miles from the present bank, but since then it has been eroded, and now the place is in the middle of the river. I lost my first wife and four sons in the 1970 cyclone. I do not remember the name of my wife, but the names of my elder sons were Horimohon and Kalimohon. They were 15 and 13. When the storm began we took shelter on a high point next to a pond. And when the waves became higher and higher, I succeeded in tying myself to the top of a pile of bamboos. I saw my family being washed away before my eyes.

Villagers walk along an embankment as they return to their villages devastated by the 1991 cyclone. (Bay of Bengal).

A young char-dweller crushes beans with his feet.



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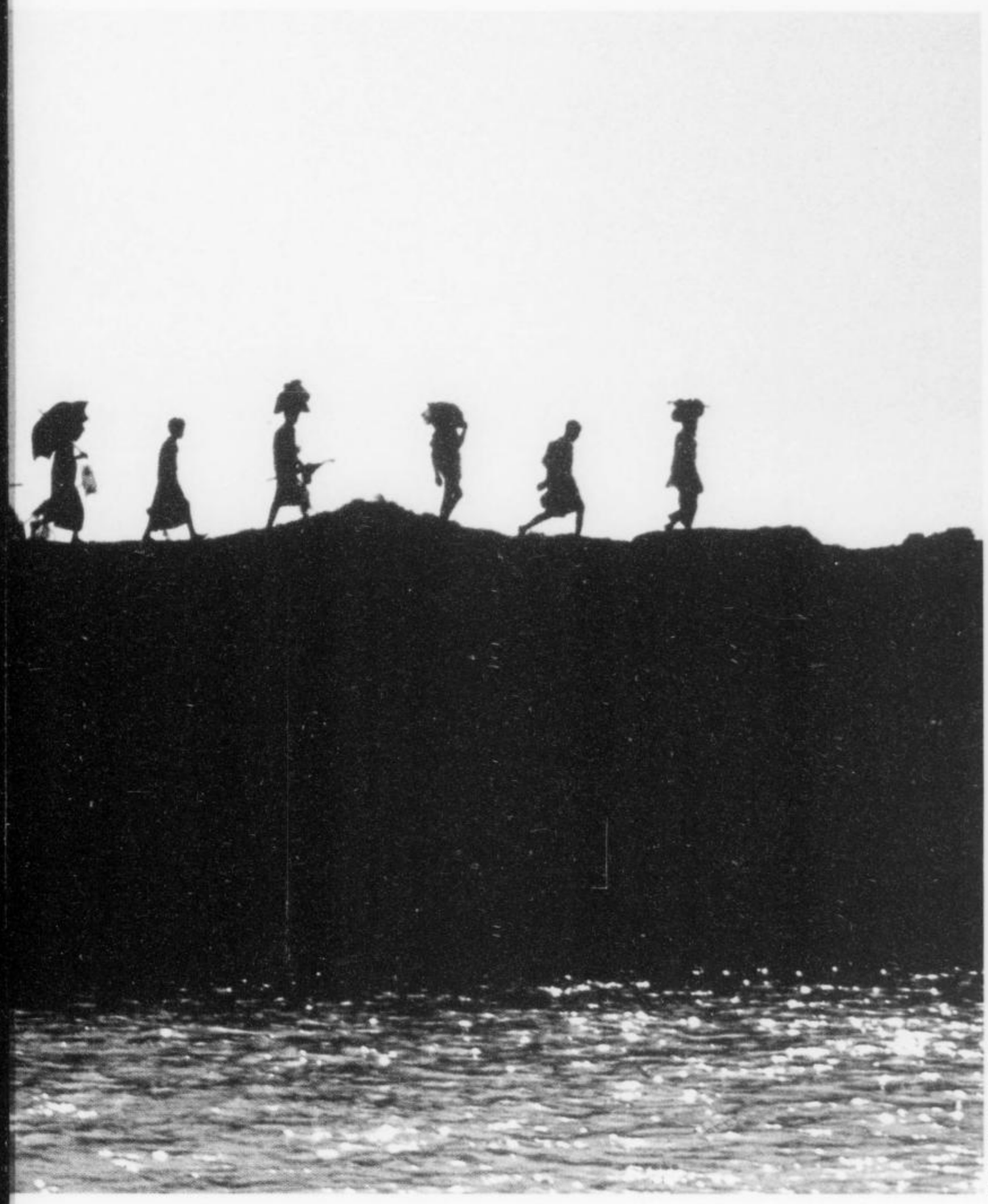

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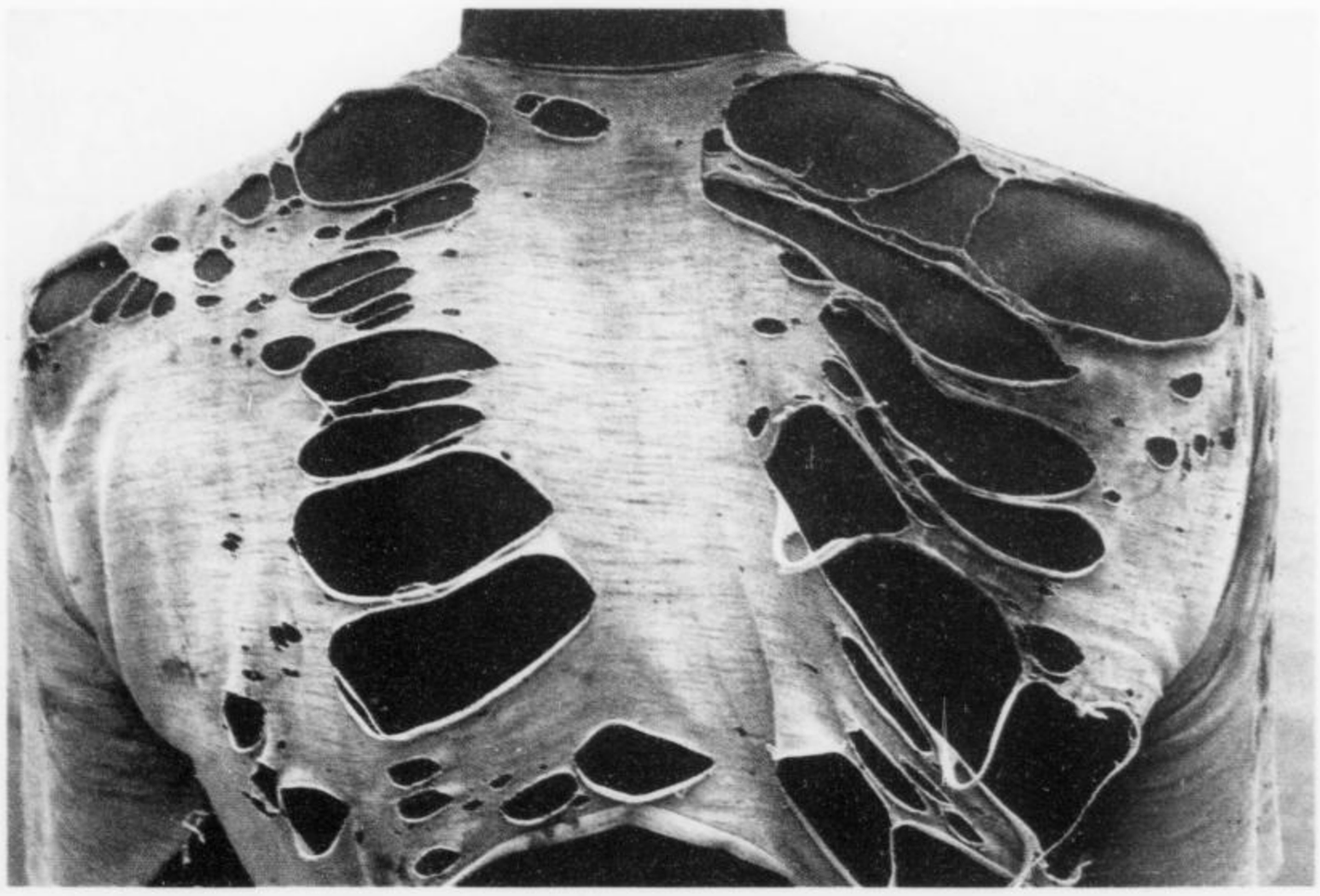
Photos © Gilles Saussier, Paris

Golapjan

Patila Char,
Fasson Thana Char,
Bhola district

On Bhola island we were landless. A landlord from our locality, Osmanganj, settled us on Patila Char 20 years ago. Here our homestead was eroded four times. We lost many trees from erosion. The sea is very near now and I am afraid of the high tide when it rolls. It sounds like a bellowing buffalo. In the 1991 cyclone I sheltered on an artificially raised mound where a land-owner kept his buffalos. We had to survive on wet rice and fruits of kaora trees. We didn't have a fire until the local official sent one of his men to bring us a flame. It was a hard struggle to keep the fire alive.

"The river breaks this way and wanders that way; that is its game," say the char-dwellers. Below, a poor landless peasant.



Photos © Gilles Saussier, Paris

Photos © Gilles Saussier, Paris

Char-dwellers living on a flood-shelter in the middle of the Jamuna-Brahmaputra river watch the coming of a monsoon shower.

Photos © Gilles Saussier, Paris

Halimon

Shaheber Alga Char
Ulpur Thana
Kurigram District

I was born in Tangail District in 1896. I came as a 15-day-old baby with the first migrants to this char. Then it looked different from today: it was covered with trees and a type of grass called catkin; there were wild animals. British people came to hunt on the char. They stayed in temporary camps.

Because of erosion I have shifted my home more than 10 times. I remember that during my childhood harvests were good. There was happiness and peace on the chars. Now, there is nothing. Before, there were rich and poor people too, but the poor had, at least, some way of earning their living. Now, most of us are poor. People have to go work on the mainland to survive.

Photos © Gilles Saussier, Paris

In a sand-storm, char-dwellers push a three-wheeled rickshaw loaded with rice bags over the bed of the Jamuna during the dry season in Tangail district.

Footprints in fresh mud on newly emerged and disputed land on Shahjalal char, Bay of Bengal.

Photos © Gilles Saussier, Paris

FOR A NEW BEGINNING

Peace is in our hands

2000 INTERNATIONAL YEAR FOR THE CULTURE OF PEACE

The year 2000 must be a new beginning for us all. Together we can transform the culture of war and violence into a culture of peace and non-violence. This transformation demands the participation of each and every one of us. It must offer young people and future generations the values that can inspire them to shape a world based on justice, solidarity, liberty, dignity, harmony and prosperity for all. The culture of peace can underpin sustainable development, environmental protection and the well-being of each person.

In November 1997, the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed the year 2000 as the International Year for the Culture of Peace. UNESCO is responsible for co-ordinating the activities of the Year worldwide.

A group of Nobel Peace Laureates who met in Paris to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights drafted Manifesto 2000 for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence[1]. Made public in Paris on March 4, 1999, the Manifesto is open to signature by people all over the world. The goal is to present 100 million signatures to the United Nations General Assembly in September 2000.

Manifesto 2000 for a culture of peace and non-violence

Recognizing my share of responsibility for the future of humanity, especially for the children of today and tomorrow, I pledge in my daily life, in my family, my work, my community, my country and my region, to:

–1 **Respect all life.** Respect the life and dignity of every person without discrimination or prejudice.

–2 **Reject violence.** Practise active non-violence, rejecting violence in all its forms: physical, sexual, psychological, economic and social, in particular towards the most deprived and vulnerable such as children and adolescents.

I pledge in my daily life, in my family, my work, my community, my country and my region, to...

–3 **Share with others.** Share my time and material resources in a spirit of generosity to put an end to exclusion, injustice and political and economic oppression.

–4 **Listen to understand.** Defend freedom of expression and cultural diversity, giving preference always to dialogue and listening without engaging in fanaticism, defamation and the rejection of others.

–5 **Preserve the planet.** Promote consumer behaviour that is responsible and development practices that respect all forms of life and preserve the balance of nature on the planet.

–6 **Rediscover solidarity.** Contribute to the development of my community, with the full participation of women and respect for democratic principles, in order to create together new forms of solidarity.

You can sign Manifesto 2000 on the Internet:
www.unseco.org/manifesto2000

or send a signed copy to:
International Year for the Culture of Peace
UNESCO,
7 Place Fontenoy,
F-75352 Paris 07 SP France
Fax: + 33 (0) 1 45 68 56 38

1. Among the first signatories were Norman Borlaug, Adolfo Perez Esquivel, the Dalai Lama, Mikhail Sergeyevich Gorbachev, Mairead Maguire, Nelson Mandela, Rigoberta Menchu Tum, Shimon Peres, Jose Ramos Horta, Joseph Rotblat, Desmond Mpilo Tutu, David Trimble, Elie Wiesel, Carlos Felipo Ximenes Belo.

THE SILENT CASUALTIES OF WAR

Paul Richards* and Louise Sperling**

By destroying local seed supply systems, warfare in the developing world jeopardizes the crop biodiversity on which sustainable agriculture depends

Moved by the human tragedy of war, we often overlook one of the other major casualties—the environment and, more specifically, agriculture. Globally, the number of armed conflicts has been rising steadily since 1945, reaching an estimated 30 major and 80 to 100 minor conflicts today.

Unlike high-tech wars involving well-armed industrial countries, many of these conflicts are low-intensity insurrections in rural areas, where farmers are the victims. Here, directly or indirectly, local seed systems may come under stress or even collapse. Apart from jeopardizing immediate food needs, the very sustainability of local agriculture can be threatened, with potentially serious consequences for the variety of genetic resources.

Biodiversity is often assessed in terms of the number of existing species. But, at least for crop plants, the genetic variation within species is equally important. Although there are half a million flowering plant species, (only half of which have been named and described), 95 per cent of human calorie and protein requirements come from a mere 30 of the 7,000 edible plant species that humans plant or collect. And more than half the global energy intake comes from just three major crops—rice, wheat and maize. Genetic variation enables farmers and agricultural scientists to continue to adapt these key crops to changing circumstances—critical for our long-term survival. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), there are as many as 100,000 distinct varieties of Asian rice (*Oryza sativa*) alone.

But what happens to seed systems when they are repeatedly disrupted by war? Farmers use several kinds of seed from different sources. They are mainly varieties taken from their previous harvests, adapted to local conditions and managed over many generations, or seeds from other regions obtained through small local markets or by exchange. Farmers also use varieties developed by research in national or multinational centres and purchased annually through formal supply networks.

Vulnerable local seed varieties

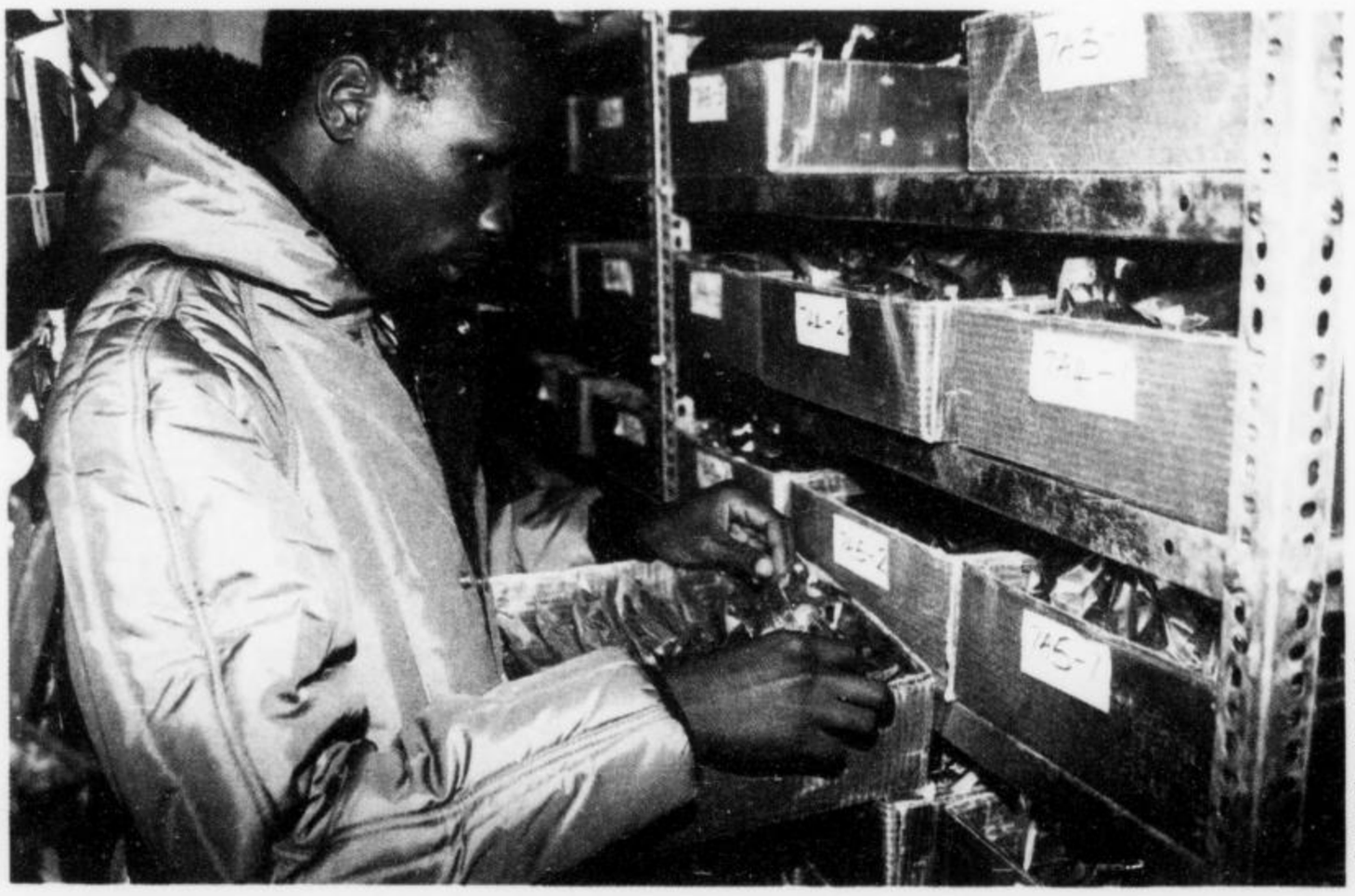
Conflict affects the supply of these kinds of seeds in different ways—and with different long-term consequences for biodiversity. For the formal (non-local) varieties, the supply of seed may dry up in times of conflict, for example because transport routes are disrupted, or because the pesticides and fertilizers needed to grow these varieties have become unavailable. This is what happened in Rwanda, when the formal potato system stopped functioning countrywide around 1991-1992—although direct combat only spread two years later.

Usually, when peace returns, these formal varieties become available once again and there are few new varietal concerns. The war in Bosnia caused a breakdown in the supply of crops. But it now appears that there were relatively few adverse genetic consequences. This is because farmers were using registered varieties supplied through formal channels. Registered seeds are likely to be backed up in collections in a number of countries. A multinational seed business caught in a war zone simply withdraws for the time being and continues its business elsewhere, with its seed collections intact.

More vulnerable in the long term are the local varieties. These may be ancient varieties, often unrecorded and at the heart of complex social interactions. Local or farmer-managed seed systems tend to be decentralized and small scale. The seeds can be obtained from small open markets, or as the currency of gift-giving, loans and exchange among people with firm social bonds.

In many African countries, up to 90 per cent of the seeds planted in any normal year

A store-room in Kenya's national gene bank, where 27,000 samples of genetic material from a wide range of crops are kept.



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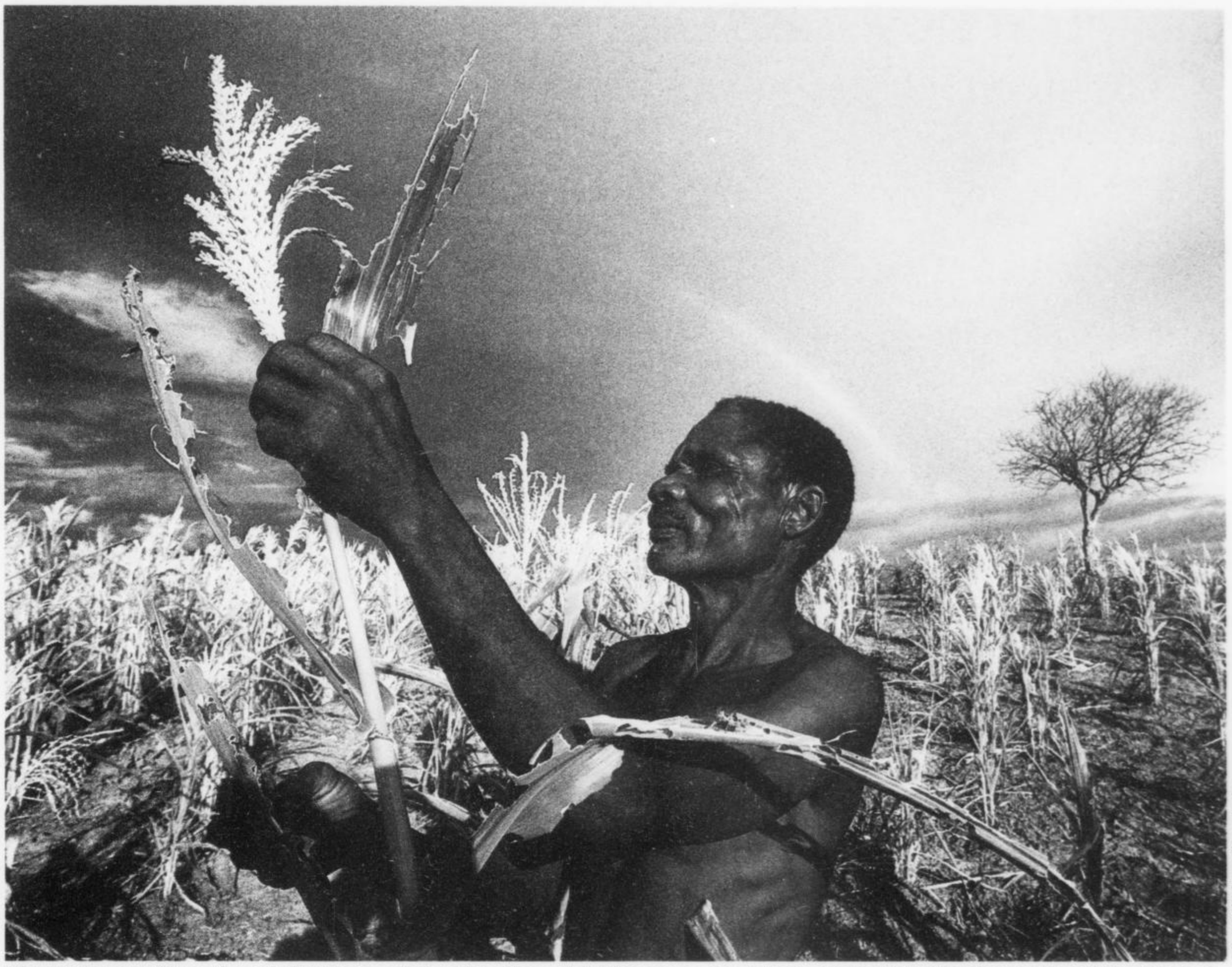
*Technology and Agricultural Development Group, Wageningen Agricultural University, The Netherlands; **Senior Scientist, International Centre for Tropical Agriculture, The Hague, The Netherlands.



© Trygve Bolstad/Panos Pictures, London

When rural communities are forced to flee, they lose their seeds and hence their future source of food. Above, a farmer in Angola, where rural populations have had to forego many planting seasons.

comes from informal sources. Even where purchase (for example, from local merchants) is an important part of an informal seed system, it is rarely backed up by the kind of specialist seed research facilities found in more developed economies. In war-affected Sierra Leone, for example, a recent study showed that the informal system was responsible in normal years for about 80 per cent of seed supply for the main staple, rice. Most informal transactions were farmer-to-farmer, in the form of gifts, purchases, and loans. In Rwanda, Burundi and Zaire, before their respective wars, over 95 per cent of bean seeds, their main protein source, came from informal seed systems.

When rural communities are forced to flee, the fine web of mutual seed support is wrecked. Refugee farmers no longer have the means to repay at harvest the seeds they borrowed from fellow-farmers in the planting season, so the system breaks down. Without the security of peace, rural communities cannot hold the markets to buy and sell seed. And farmers no longer know that what they plant can indeed be harvested in four, nine or 18 months' time (the cycles of beans, potatoes and cassava, respectively). Seed may be totally lacking, or farmers may be unable to access it, because social ties are ruptured, or because they are just too poor. In some cases, farmers under fire may have stored appropriate seed, but simply cannot plant it. Alternatively, seed may be available, but of poor quality.

War has affected fourteen African countries during the 1990s, with rural populations being the major casualties

Genetic loss, then, is most likely when conflict is concentrated in remote rural areas, where it is fairly widespread geographically, and when it lasts for several years in succession. This was the case in Angola and Mozambique, where isolated and vulnerable rural populations lost many planting seasons. War has affected fourteen African countries during the 1990s, with rural populations most heavily dependent on locally adapted seeds being the major casualties.

Some countries are especially rich in local varieties and the wild relatives of crop species. The breakdown of local seed systems in these countries can cause irreversible damage to the global genetic resources of food crops. For example, major wars in Guinea Bissau, Liberia and Sierra Leone, along with lesser insurrections in Casamance (Senegal) and Guinea have affected every country in the West African coastal zone of ancient rice agriculture. This region is a key centre for genetic diversity in African rice (*Oryza glaberrima*), which, as a result of recent technological advances, can now be cross-bred with Asian rice, one of the world's key food crops. It will be of global significance if this under-collected and little-studied African crop is ▶

CROP PLANT BIODIVERSITY AND ARMED CONFLICT

1. Central America: maize, beans, sweet potatoes;
2 and 3. the Andes: potatoes, beans, peanuts;
4. Southern Brazil: manioc;
5. Mediterranean: oats, rape;
6. West Africa: millet, fonio, African rice, sorghum, yams, cowpeas, groundnuts;
7. Southwest Asia: rye, barley, wheat, peas;
8. Ethiopia: rye, sorghum, millet;
9. Central Asia: wheat;
10. India-Myanmar: rice, dwarf wheat;
11. China: rice, soya,millet;
12. Southeast Asia: bananas, sugar cane, yams, rice.

Source: *State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources*, FAO and International Institute for Strategic Studies, London

This map shows the main and secondary "centres of diversity and origin" where the world's most important crop plants were first domesticated. They constitute "genetic reservoirs" since they generally contain a wide diversity of varieties of each plant. The map also shows, in darker shading, countries within which and/or on whose borders there is armed conflict at the present time.

► a casualty of the regional warfare and massive displacement of rural civilians.

So what can be done to offset this kind of genetic disaster? During the Tigrean conflicts in the northern highlands of Ethiopia, that lasted on and off for two decades, community elders organized emergency seed banks of maize, sorghum, wheat, barley, finger millet and teff—an annual grass grown for its grain. This was mostly to improve the deteriorating seed quality, rather than because of short supply. In Ethiopia, a country with rich local varieties, plant scientists have invested in crop genetic resource conservation and in understanding the impact of war and drought on seed supply.

Ironically, humanitarian agencies often make the situation worse, by responding to seed system breakdown by supplying farmers with seed from outside the country: Giving "seed and tools" is the standard second relief response after food. Seed aid is usually "exotic", not tested or suited to local conditions and is alien to the cultural management practices of farmers.

Ironically, humanitarian agencies often make the situation worse, by responding to seed system breakdown by supplying farmers with seed from outside the country

In some countries there are national efforts to restore crop diversity lost due to war. International Agricultural Research Centres have been restoring bean and sorghum genetic material to gene banks in war-torn Rwanda and Burundi, local varieties of barley, durum wheat and bread wheat to Eritrea and rice seeds to institutes in the trouble-spots of Liberia and Guinea Bissau—and even Cambodia. All these countries lost their centralized gene bank stocks, although it is not known if there was any loss of diversity at farm level.

To reinforce this kind of work, some regions, such as the West African zone of ancient rice cultivation, will need specialist missions to rescue and conserve endangered local varieties. This will mean gathering information on cultural and farming practices, too. War threatens not only seeds but also the knowledge that farming populations possess about how, where and when to use locally-adapted local varieties.

It is difficult to estimate the true scale of crop biodiversity loss in war-torn regions. For several decades, small farmers have given oral accounts of significant variety loss. It is only now, with the development of biotechnologies, that plant scientists have the tools to measure genetic losses precisely. ■

COLOMBIA: THE SEEDS OF RETURN

Leticia Reyes

As terror and death stalk rural Colombia, preserving biodiversity is a priority for the food security of displaced communities

"I grabbed the basket we used for storing beans and maize, threw in a couple of blankets and some nappies and put one of my children in it," said a 44-year-old peasant woman. "I hoisted another child on my shoulders and tied a piece of rag to a third and kept him in front of me. I was carrying another child in my belly. We had to spend the night in the forest. I was knee deep in mud and the kids were up to their eyes in it."[1]

Similar tragic stories could be told by thousands of Colombian families who are being forced to abandon their homes because of civil war, which is mainly being fought between paramilitary forces and guerrillas. Since 1985, forced population movement has affected 1.5 million (308,000 in 1998) of the country's 38 million people. More than two-thirds of the refugees are from the countryside.

"People leave because they can no longer live off the land," said Hernán Henao, director of the Regional Studies Institute at the University of Antioquia, a few days before he was murdered on May 4 1999. "Armed groups use intimidation, threats and massacres to stop the peasants going to the villages to buy and sell." One by one, in families or in groups, people are fleeing the countryside. Many die on the road. Most end up in the poverty-stricken outskirts of the cities. Only five per cent organize themselves into new "resettlement" communities or return to their land.

As farmers leave the countryside, local food production comes to a halt. Swissaid, a Swiss non-governmental organization working with displaced communities, the Diocese of Apartadó and the International Red Cross, is trying to restore this production, especially in the Urabá region, one of the hotspots of the civil war. The first priority is to guarantee food security by collecting seeds of basic foodstuffs lost during the war. The second is to re-establish family plots, which are traditionally tended by the womenfolk and where a wide variety of crop species are grown.

The Indians, guardians of biodiversity

Participants in the programme start by making an inventory of lost varieties and then go looking for them in nearby villages. If there has been a massive exodus of people, there will be no neighbours and therefore no seeds. The job then becomes harder. "In an area where everyone has left, you can lose a variety that a community has been using for centuries," says Hans Wiederkehr, Swissaid's representative in Colombia. A lot also depends on how long the population displacement lasts. "North of the River Atrato, for example, not a single one of the 47 known rice varieties identified there were left when people returned to the area a year later. This was long enough for rice, maize, bean and plant seeds to be lost, because their germination period varies between three and six months. Yucca and plantain seeds, however, can survive for about two years."

But how can people recuperate the seeds when they live in an atmosphere of flight, fear, threats and death? "What we're doing can only succeed because the communities retain a basic capacity for self-management," said Wiederkehr. "In this sense, the contribution of the Indians (who were living in the region when the Spaniards came), has been crucial because they've turned themselves into what you might call 'guardians of biodiversity'. For more than 500 years, the Indians have lived like nomads, so they're very good at organizing themselves and resisting."

In early 1995, for example, all the 700 or so people in the Zenú Indian village of El Volao in Uraba left the protected zone. In the second half of that year, Swissaid and the Indigenous Organization of Antioquia helped launch "Project Return", which included a proposal for sustainable ecological farming. Two years later, three-quarters of the population of El Volao had returned and just over half the "breadbasket" varieties—maize, rice, yucca, beans, plantains and yams—which existed before the exodus had been recovered. Today, more than 150 kinds of plants ▸

In Colombia, banana seeds can survive for about two years, whereas rice, maize and bean seeds are lost after 3-6 months.

© Jesús Abad Colorado, Colombie

[1] Colombian journalist

► grow in the vegetable gardens tended by the women. Some of them, including chillies, sweet potato, basil and pigeon peas, possess considerable genetic diversity.

Recuperating all the seeds is very difficult. The project's promoters say the Colombian government's short-term humanitarian aid policies often hamper efforts to preserve and restore biodiversity. "The authorities offer 'improved' seeds and animal varieties without thinking about the harm they might do to local genetic biodiversity, and especially without taking into account the knowledge accumulated by local people over the centuries," says Swissaid's Germán Vélez. "They also encourage the intensive use of chemicals, marketing techniques and one-crop farming," he adds.

The projects have developed in very different ways depending on whether they involve people returning to their own land—as the Zenú Indians did—or going to "temporary settlements" far from their original homes, as in the case of the region's black communities. The situation of the latter is very precarious. For them, public services, including health, are virtually non-existent and food is scarce. But these communities, descended from escaped slaves (maroons), are good at organizing themselves.

Preservation of biodiversity hangs by a thread

At the end of 1998, 3,500 Afro-Colombian peasants, refugees in the town of Pavarandó, began talks with government officials to fund their return home. Since then, they have launched a "Food Security" programme with support from Swissaid. The menfolk go to nearby communities in search of seeds, while the women distribute them to the vegetable gardens, identify medicinal plants and exchange know-how. The women know all about crop cycles, soil quality and especially the needs of the family. Several food crops have already been harvested thanks to teamwork and preparatory workshops. Committees have also been set up to look after seed storage. But the security situation is very serious—12 peasants were murdered by a group of paramilitaries on April 7 1999—and leaving the settlements is become increasingly dangerous.

The fact is that in Colombia preservation of biodiversity hangs by a thread. What's more, both Indians and peasants have only very slender chances of being able to return for good to their land (their rights to which were recognized in 1993) and reclaim their dignity in a country where fundamental rights are violated on a daily basis and where violence is destroying the links between land, communities and traditional resources. Meanwhile, it is reckoned that every hour, one Colombian family is being forced to leave their home. How long can this go on? ■

1. From *Desarraigo y Futuro: vida cotidiana de familias desplazadas de Urabá* ("Displacement and the Future: the daily life of refugee families in Urabá"). Medellín, Regional Studies Institute of the University of Antioquia, 1998.

SOMALIA'S BITTER HARVEST

◗ Dan Kiambi

An ambitious international project to maintain crop variety in a war-torn country

In 1989 a scientist travelled from Somalia to Kenya with a precious cargo in his luggage—a complete duplicate set of the 284 samples of sorghum and maize genetic material from Somalia's Baidoa/Afgoi gene bank. His destination was the Kenya National Genebank, where the collection would be conserved along with 27,000 samples of genetic material from a wide range of crops.

At the time the scientist could not know just how important this trip was to be. Two years later, a civil war broke out in Somalia. It is still not over, and one of its casualties has been the Baidoa/Afgoi research and conservation centre. The entire gene bank of local plant crop varieties has been wiped out.

According to a survey carried out in 1996-97, the continued state of unrest in Somalia not only severely damaged farm production, but also led to the loss of some local crop species altogether. This is why the duplicate collection held in Kenya became so important. In 1996, with funding from the European Union, through the Somalia Office in Nairobi, in collaboration with Co-operazione Italiana Nord-Sud (CINS) and the National Genebank of Kenya, scientists from the International Plant Genetic Resources Institute (IPGRI) embarked on an ambitious project. They would reproduce crop seed material from the genetic samples stored in Kenya and repatriate it to Somalia for planting.

The project concentrated on the Middle Shebelle, a fertile flood plain in Somalia, covering the three districts of Balaad, Bulu Burti and Jowhar. Researchers assessing the effects of the war found that farmers there had access to a very limited number of crop varieties. Seeds were often scarce and of low quality. Hungry families, too poor to buy new seed, were eating the very seed stocks they were hoping to plant for food. The war had destroyed irrigation systems, as well as crucial farming equipment including milling machines, water pumps and tractors.

After consultations with local administrators, farmers and NGOs working in the area, project scientists introduced 151 sorghum and 14 maize samples that had previously been multiplied genetically by the National Genebank of Kenya and airfreighted to the project site. The materials were supplied to 90 farmers for on-farm trials in nine different villages, three in each district. A parallel on-station trial was set up at the CINS project site at Deganley, in Balaad, for comparison.

After about a year, farmers had selected 13 varieties out of the 165 samples for further trials. If the farmers were happy with the results, they would adopt them as part of their farming practice. The project also set up a new gene bank of over 240 samples of the reintroduced seed material at Deganley, just in case.

But disaster struck again. Rival factions of the Somali warlords attacked the base at Deganley and destroyed the new gene bank, including some material collected in Somalia during the project. The attackers stole the centre's computer with all the data and software. They also held one CINS expatriate scientist captive for three days before releasing him.

In November 1997, following this attack, the project terminated its activities in Somalia. It was not possible to follow up the on-farm trials to see how farmers got on with the 13 selected elite plant varieties. But the results already looked promising and farmers have the seeds. With luck, the best ones will filter into the farming systems in the course of time and help re-diversify the genetic base of sorghum and maize, if not in the project site, then elsewhere in Somalia. ■

◗ Regional Office for Sub-Saharan Africa (Nairobi) of the International Plant Genetic Resources Institute.

ASIA TAKES A CRASH COURSE IN EDUCATIONAL REFORM

Matthew Pennington

Photos © Jonathan Drake, Singapore

In Singapore, where most children receive 10 years of state schooling, the accent is now being put on more creative thinking and learning.

Southeast Asia's booming economy for decades masked deficiencies in educational systems. But now, in the wake of financial crisis, the region is bent on getting smarter faster

Asia's financial crisis may have a silver lining, at least when it comes to education. In the wake of the crisis that began in 1997, the limping Southeast Asian tigers are shoring up their educational systems to make their economies stronger and more resilient to the type of financial shock which has left the region reeling from recession.

In Thailand, a constitutional overhaul is leading to the biggest shake-up of the educational system since the days of absolute monarchy. Indonesia has introduced an emergency scholarship system. Malaysia is launching its first computerized "smart schools". And Singapore has begun a campaign to teach innovative thinking.

Despite differences among the Southeast Asian countries, a few main threads run throughout their approaches. First, these countries recognize the need for a quantum leap in basic education and skills standards in order for the labour force to regain competitiveness. Second, rote learning is giving way to a new call for creative thinking. Finally, in Thailand and Indonesia, authority over curricula and spending is being decentralized to make education more responsive to local needs.

Even before the crisis, it was clear educational systems in many cases were lagging behind economic development in Southeast Asia. For three decades these countries had ridden the crest of export-oriented economic growth. An important pillar of the growth was cheap, unskilled labour. However, in recent years countries like China, Viet Nam and India have undercut the cost of labour in Southeast Asia. This left Southeast Asia less competitive in provision of bargain-priced labour for basic manufacturing. Meanwhile, skills training was not keeping pace with the global market, making it difficult for these countries to compete in high added value industries such as information technology (IT).

In Thailand and Indonesia, though all this was apparent prior to 1997, governments ▶

Bangkok-based journalist, with additional reporting by Jeeraporn Chaisri.

▶ dragged their feet about addressing the deficiencies. It was easier to put off much-needed reforms then because the economies were growing quickly, overall standards of living were improving and there was little pressure on governments to undertake important reform. Malaysia and Singapore have generally been forward-looking when it comes to education. The fallout of the crisis has increased their resolve to develop even more sophisticated educational systems.

Thailand revamps its constitution

"There's a link between our education and economic models," says Professor S. Gopinathan, Singapore's National Institute of Education (NIE) dean, in reference to his country's educational system. "Our economy has been based on export-led industrialization, which requires reasonably educated and obedient labour, as well as capital and markets. But the new economic paradigm will be value-added in an entirely different kind of way: the ability to use knowledge and data."

In Thailand an ambitious education reform bill, which lays the foundations for the most radical shake-up of the pedagogical system since the British-educated King Rama VI (1910-25) introduced compulsory education to the country, is set to be approved by parliament.

Photo © Peter Turnley/Black Star/Studio B, Paris

In Indonesia, the financial crisis has led to a sharp rise in school dropout numbers.

Deputy Education Minister Somsak Prisanantakul calls it a "turning point for Thai society", that will lead to less state dominance of education, and more public participation. It amounts to what is being called a new educational constitution, incorporating the right, enshrined in Thailand's new "people's" charter adopted in late 1997, of every Thai to 12 years of state-paid education—compared with the current average in practice of 5.3 years.

During the 30 years up to the financial crisis that began in July 1997, as per capita gross domestic product quadrupled in real terms, primary school enrolment grew from around 70 per cent to 90 per cent. Secondary school enrolment rose from 40 per cent to over 70 per cent.

But fundamental problems have persisted with the education system, in which one in every four children aged between six and 17 is still not in school, and modes of teaching appear increasingly outdated. Rote learning prevails and to the minds of alternative educationalists in Thailand, this cultivates obedience to authority rather than stimulating independent thought. Most critically in the eyes of economic planners, the Thai workforce is under-qualified and lacks technical expertise.

Even before the crash, concerns were growing about Thailand's ability to shift from a labour-intensive to a more technology-based era. "We were reliant on expertise from abroad," said Sombat Suwanpitak, the Thai government's director of non-formal education development.

According to a 1996 government survey, three-quarters of the workforce aged over 21 years had no secondary education. At the upper end of the educational scale there was a dearth of international-standard science and engineering graduates coming out of a university system traditionally oriented to producing government bureaucrats.

This reality, driven home by the crisis, has given additional impetus to the reform bill, seen as the foundation for developing the quality education Thailand needs. Passed by the lower house of Thailand's parliament in March, it marks a shift in priorities, increasingly evident across Southeast Asia, towards learner-centred education, which lays greater stress on creative and analytical ability than on rote learning. "The majority of teachers are used to standing at the front of the class and giving a lecture," says Dr. Rung Kaewdang, secretary-general of the Office of the National Education Commission. "Now there will be a shift towards assisting individual pupils and group learning."

Young Thais seem to approve. "Students should learn how to be independent and competitive," says Ms. Chanthima Sujjavirakul, 22, an accounting student at Bangkok University. They should be "ready to learn for themselves."

Implementing legislation expected over the next few years will devolve both academic and financial power to schools and local authorities, scything the responsibility of ministry officials in Bangkok. Dr Rung argues that by promoting more direct involvement of parents and governors in

'The main risk (of failure) is the old bugaboo of Thailand–political instability, but with the new constitution in place it feels more secure.'

THAILAND'S NATIONAL EDUCATION BILL

Key measures of the new "education constitution":

- Right to free, 12-year state education
- Education to be "learner-centred" and promote democracy and human rights
- Special education for persons with physical, mental and learning difficulties
- Greater recognition for non-formal education and lifelong learning
- More local content in school curricula
- Three ministerial-level organizations to be integrated into one ministry
- Decentralization of financial and administrative responsibilities

Selected indicators

	Indonesia	Malaysia	Singapore	Thailand	World average
Population (1997) (millions)	**200**	**21**	**3**	**61**	
GNP per capita (1997) (Purchasing power parity $)	**3,450**	**10,920**	**29,000**	**6,590**	**6,330**
(world rank)	**67**	**29**	**1**	**41**	
Adult literacy rate (1995)	**83.8%**	**83.5%**	**91.1%**	**93.8%**	**77.4%**
Public expenditure on education (1995) (as % of GNP)	**1.4**	**5.3**	**3.0**	**4.2**	**4.9**
Total enrolment in higher education (1995) (as % of total school-age population)	**11**	**11**	**34**	**20**	

Sources: UNESCO, UNDP, World Bank.

management of schools, the reforms will ensure greater accountability—and sidestep large-scale corruption. For example, before the crisis, the ministry of education was embroiled in a scandal over the procurement of computers, which became a national political issue.

Meanwhile, giving more responsibility to teachers for devising their own curricula—rather than sticking rigidly to the national curriculum—should in theory make education more sensitive to the needs of local communities. This is a priority for the estimated 550,000 of the population from hilltribe minorities living along the mountainous borders with Laos and Myanmar, whose education lags badly behind that of lowland Thais.

However, educational experts worry the country could be trying to embark on too many changes at once. "It's a massive task, to streamline the ministries, to undertake decentralization of the system, to give jurisdiction to communities which have no expertise in managing schools, and on top of that, strive for academic excellence," says Gary Suwannarat, a staff consultant to the Asian Development Bank in Thailand. "The main risk (of failure) is the old bugaboo of Thailand—political instability," says John Middleton, World Bank senior education adviser in Thailand. "But with the new constitution in place things feel more secure."

Indonesia decentralizes

In Indonesia, political reform since the fall last year of the military ruler of 32 years, President Suharto, has given momentum to changes in the education system. Gains during Suharto's reign—when education was the cornerstone of development policy and the proportion of the population without primary schooling shrunk from around three-quarters to one-third—are under threat.

A 13 per cent contraction in the economy in 1998, causing a sharp decline in urban family incomes and their ability to cover the modest expenses of state schooling, presented education authorities with their own crisis—to prevent mass dropouts.

The most worrying rise in dropouts has been in urban areas, where they have tripled last year in secondary schools, particularly among girls. According to a World Bank study, female enrolment in junior secondary schools in Jakarta dropped by 19 per cent in 1998/99.

In the crime-ridden Indonesian capital there has been a clear increase in street children cleaning windshields, begging, and selling newspapers. "Jockeys" hang around road intersections leading into the central business district, to earn cash by offering to be passengers for car drivers who risk a fine if they go into the congested city centre in an empty vehicle. "The overall effect, of course, is that these kids are going nowhere near schools," noted Stephen Hill, UNESCO representative in Indonesia.

In an effort to prevent mass school dropouts, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the World Bank have pumped over $300 million of loans into a five-year scheme to provide scholarships to some four million students from poor families across Indonesia at risk of ditching secondary school, as well as 140,000 block grants to ▶

Thailand is in the midst of the most far-reaching educational reform in over 70 years.

© Claude Barthe/Sunset, Paris

► schools reeling from a drop in real terms of state funding. According to a recent World Bank report, even before the crisis, many schools needed books, supplies and substantial maintenance, with government grants to primary schools amounting to less than $0.40 per pupil per year.

The scholarship scheme has been supported by a major state-backed "Stay in School" campaign, with adverts on TV with the catch phrase "aku anak sekolah"—"I'm a schoolkid." All funds are being dispersed, when possible, directly to student and school accounts held at post offices across the country, in a bid to cut out on administrative overheads and "leakage".

Education minister Juwono Sudarsono has conceded in a recent interview that graft is a problem—and that from 10 to 15 per cent of the funds are likely to be written off. Concerns have also been voiced about delays in disbursement.

The ADB is upbeat about the scholarship scheme, which it sees as laying the groundwork for a radical decentralization of education financing in the future. An official monitoring report of the scheme concluded that 81 per cent of the $2.50 per month scholarships have reached the poorest students in the first year, and virtually all have received the correct amount of money.

Government officials sound a more cautious note, seeing the scheme as a stop-gap measure. But the process of decentralization of authority for school budgets and management appears inevitable. "Decentralization is a must," said Dr Indra Djati Sidi, director-general of primary and secondary education, adding that educational programmes devolving more authority to districts for teacher training and construction of schools had actually started two years ago. "What the crisis has done is speed up the process."

The education ministry appears set on retaining control of the core national curriculum and exams, but acknowledges that districts have a better idea of the educational needs of communities than officials in Jakarta. The government policy introduced in the early 1990s to allow 20 per cent local content in the school curriculum—essential in an ethnically and geographically diverse country of 200 million people—remains hamstrung by a lack of local capacity to go beyond the rigid national curriculum.

Malaysia and Singapore: smart schools and creative kids

Malaysia and Singapore have pressed ahead with ambitious plans to change the whole concept of schooling.

Malaysia embarked this year, albeit falteringly, on a "smart schools" project to provide the country with the innovative IT experts and computer-savvy workers of tomorrow, in what the government is touting as a unique partnership between the state and private sector.

A consortium of 12 mainly multinational IT firms have been charged with devising systems and software to equip 90 fully computerized schools. Some 30 per cent of the designated schools are in rural areas.

"If we don't go hi-tech and embrace brain-intensive industries, then Malaysia will be left reliant on labour-intensive industries, forever a developing country," declares Dr Rojani Abdul Hamid of the Malaysian ministry of education

The idea is for the consortium to design a "total solution" for computerized schools, including electronic teaching materials as well as systems for student assessment and administration and management. Children will be able to study at their own speed, and take exams—accessed online from a centralized database—when they are ready to. "Courseware" on CD Rom will be provided for four subjects: science and technology, maths, English and Bahasa Melayu (the national language of Malaysia).

The overriding aim is to provide the skills base for the planned Multimedia Super Corridor, an IT industrial hub which will stretch 50 kilometres south from the capital, Kuala Lumpur—the centrepiece of Premier Mahathir Mohamad's drive for Malaysia to achieve developed nation status by 2020.

Computer industry sources say the economic crisis and problems of coordinating the private sector consortium has caused delays. The education ministry has stepped into the breach, devising interim computer lesson plans and other teaching materials to ease the still-underequipped schools into the IT era.

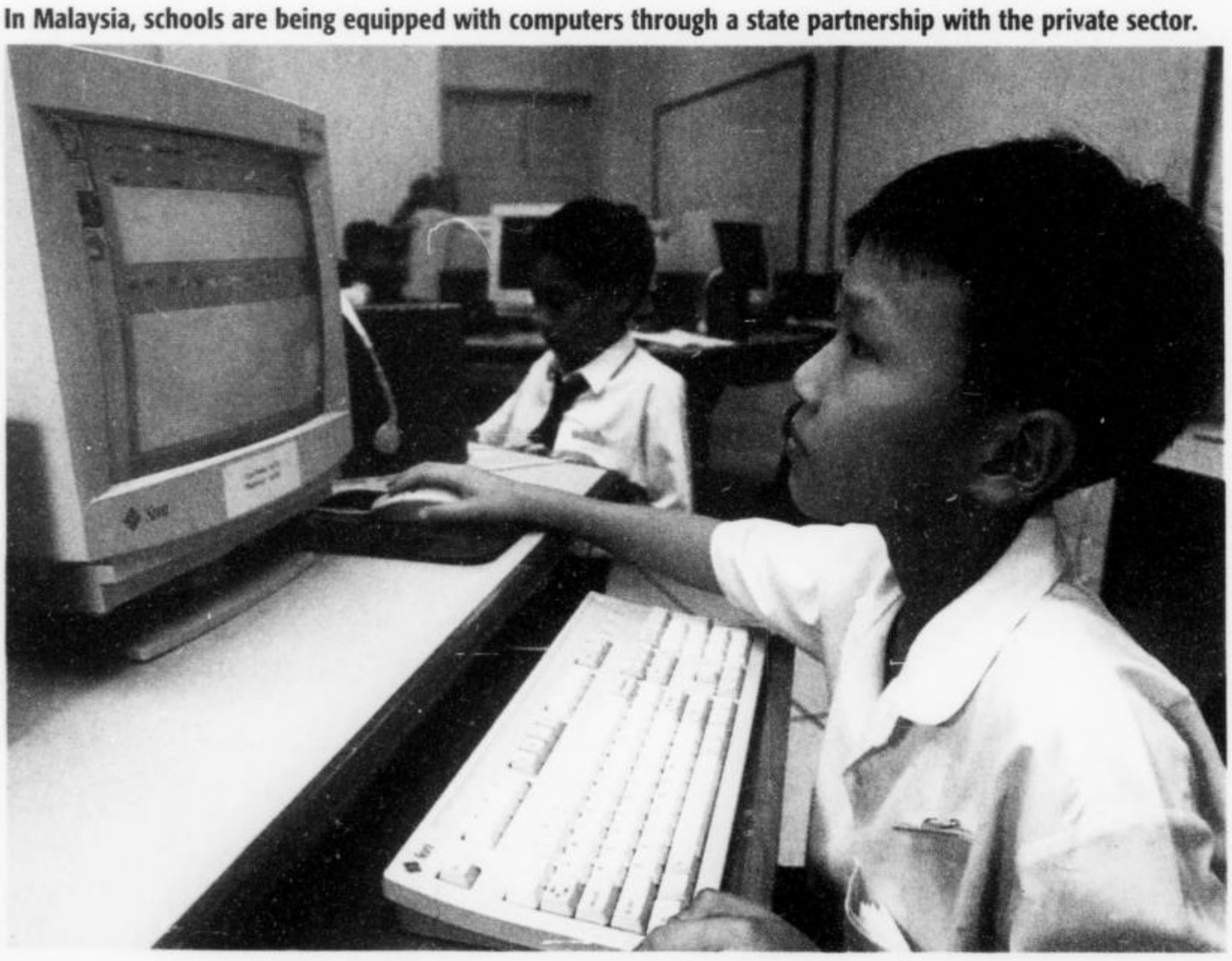
'Decentralization is a must. What the crisis has done is speed up the process.'

Singapore meanwhile has announced plans to invest over $2.6 billion into building and upgrading 290 schools over the next seven years, on its relentless quest to improve an education system of already remarkable efficiency. The majority of children among the Singaporean population of 3.5 million pass through 10 years of state schooling.

But these achievements belie insecurity about the innovative ability of Singaporean students. Last year, the NIE, which is responsible for all teacher training, adopted a new programme that represents a sea change in the approach to classroom learning. It's called "teaching thinking" and is designed to encourage what was once taboo—students coming up with their own ideas.

According to the NIE's Professor Gopinathan, Singapore has previously relied on content mastery or the "pedagogy of the worksheet". But the global economy of the future demands something more. "We need a learning environment that allows for flexibility and collaborative learning," he says. ■

In Malaysia, schools are being equipped with computers through a state partnership with the private sector.



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FOCUS

Tourism and culture: rethinking the mix

Contents

22 Is cultural tourism on the right track? Mike Robinson

24 The pioneers Roy Malkin

26 The globalization of tourism

1| People and tourism

28 The Himalayas: masked dances and mixed blessings Myra Shackley

30 Masters in their own tepees Garry Marchant

32 Ecotourism without tears Sylvie Blangy

34 Peru's 'meet the people' tours Leticia Gonzáles de Remoué

2| Safeguarding heritage

35 Heritage and tourism: will market forces rule? Valérie Patin

37 Pompeii puts its house in order Martine Jacot

38 Learning holidays: a thumbnail guide Garry Marchant

40 Petra's new invaders Christophe Ayad

42 Venice: coping with culture vultures Antonio Paolo Russo

44 Luang Prabang: a ghost town returns to life Francis Engelmann

47 A slow rescue for Morocco's earthen citadels Mohamed Berriane

49 Central Europe: castles gear up for business Cynthia Guttman

51 The right road for Compostela Lucía Iglesias Kuntz

3| Reflections

53 Club Med: an empire built on the sands Amy Otchet

54 Philosophy of a guidebook guru Tony Wheeler

56 Towards an ethics of tourism Cynthia Guttman

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The world's leading category of international trade, tourism is increasingly offering a range of cultural products, from visiting monuments to the discovery of unique ways of life. This growing trend fuelled by a quest for cultural enrichment can encourage the revival of traditions and the restoration of sites and monuments. But unbridled tourism can have the opposite effect.

Here there is a real dilemma. Is there not a risk that the boom in cultural tourism, by the sheer weight of numbers involved, may harbour the seeds of its own destruction by eroding the very cultures and sites that are its stock in trade?

Our introductory section explores this dilemma along with the origins and growth of cultural tourism. Part 1 presents case studies showing what indigenous communities are doing to control tourism in their lands.

In Part 2 we examine the world of site management, where the track record is at best mixed. In conclusion, two prominent personalities in the tourist business defend mass tourism, while its advocates and other key players enter the final stages of drawing up a global code of ethics for tourism.

Is cultural tourism on the right track?

Mike Robinson

Tourism has long been assumed to promote cultural understanding and peace, but in fact it often chips away at cultures and leads to conflict

Among the Toraja people of Sulawesi, Indonesia, not all was going well with tourism. In fact, resentment became so great over the way in which sacred funeral ceremonies were being adapted to meet tourists' needs that in the late 1980s, a number of Toraja communities simply refused to accept tourists.

The Toraja example highlights the dilemma that faces contemporary cultural tourism. On the one hand tourists increasingly seek exotic and often unique cultural spectacles and experiences, and are willing to pay a premium to do so. But on the other hand, the very presence of tourists can chip away at local culture and essentially re-invent it to fit the exigencies of the tourism industry.

The result is that host communities find culture and traditions under threat from the purchasing power of the tourism industry. Neither are tourists better off from the cultural viewpoint. Instead of getting rich and authentic cultural insights and experiences, tourists get *staged* authenticity; instead of getting exotic culture, they get kitsch.

With nearly one billion international trips expected in 2000, the impact of tourism on culture has become so palpable that the question arises as to whether or not we can continue along the current path without something having to give. More than ever, we must find a way to achieve sustainable cultural tourism.

Surprisingly, and in contrast to the attention given to the natural environment in the sustainable development debate, very little energy has been devoted to this end. A major reason for this lethargy appears to lie in our basic assumptions about tourism.

The predominant notion is that tourism generates cultural harmony. This idea derives from the romantic (and elitist) traditions of travel in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and is today enshrined in the World Tourism Organization's mission statement, which includes the goal of fostering international peace and understanding.

But claims that tourism is a vital force for peace are exaggerated. Indeed there is little evidence that tourism is drawing the world closer together. The truth is that a host of cultural conflicts have developed around tourism.

Little thought is given to the fact that tourism is one globalizing influence which can initiate dramatic and irreversible changes within the cultures of host communities. Unfortunately, while the idea that we should respect cultures and cultural rights may be present, the idea that we should *sustain* cultures is not fully developed. Nor is there any clear indication of which cultures we are speaking of

Perhaps the most obvious conflict is between tourist and host. This is in part engendered by the fundamental difference in goals: while the tourist is engaged in leisure, the host is engaged in work. While the tourist arrives with loads of expectations, many of the local stakeholders often have no idea of what to expect.

Another source of conflict is between the often persuasive and economically powerful developers and operators of the international (though mainly first world) tourism industry and the host country. Tourism can turn local cultures into commodities, that is, consumer items much like any others. Religious rituals, ethnic rites and festivals continue to be reduced and sanitized to conform with tourist expectations, resulting in what one scholar has dubbed "reconstructed ethnicity."

An unequal relationship

Part of the conflict stems from the fact that packaging culture begins well away from the cultural site. Cultures are reduced to a two-dimensional world carried by glossy brochures presenting idyllic locations and generally reducing distinctive cultures to superficial and readily substitutable narratives.

The flow of tourism receipts is mainly to the developed world—where the majority of tourism businesses are located—creating a permanent backdrop for conflict.

Another level of conflict is found among different sectors of the host community. For example, locals working in the tourism industry might have different goals from those of agricultural workers in the same community. Access to tourism employment, which in developing countries also means often access to relatively high wages, may be skewed to certain social and ethnic groups.

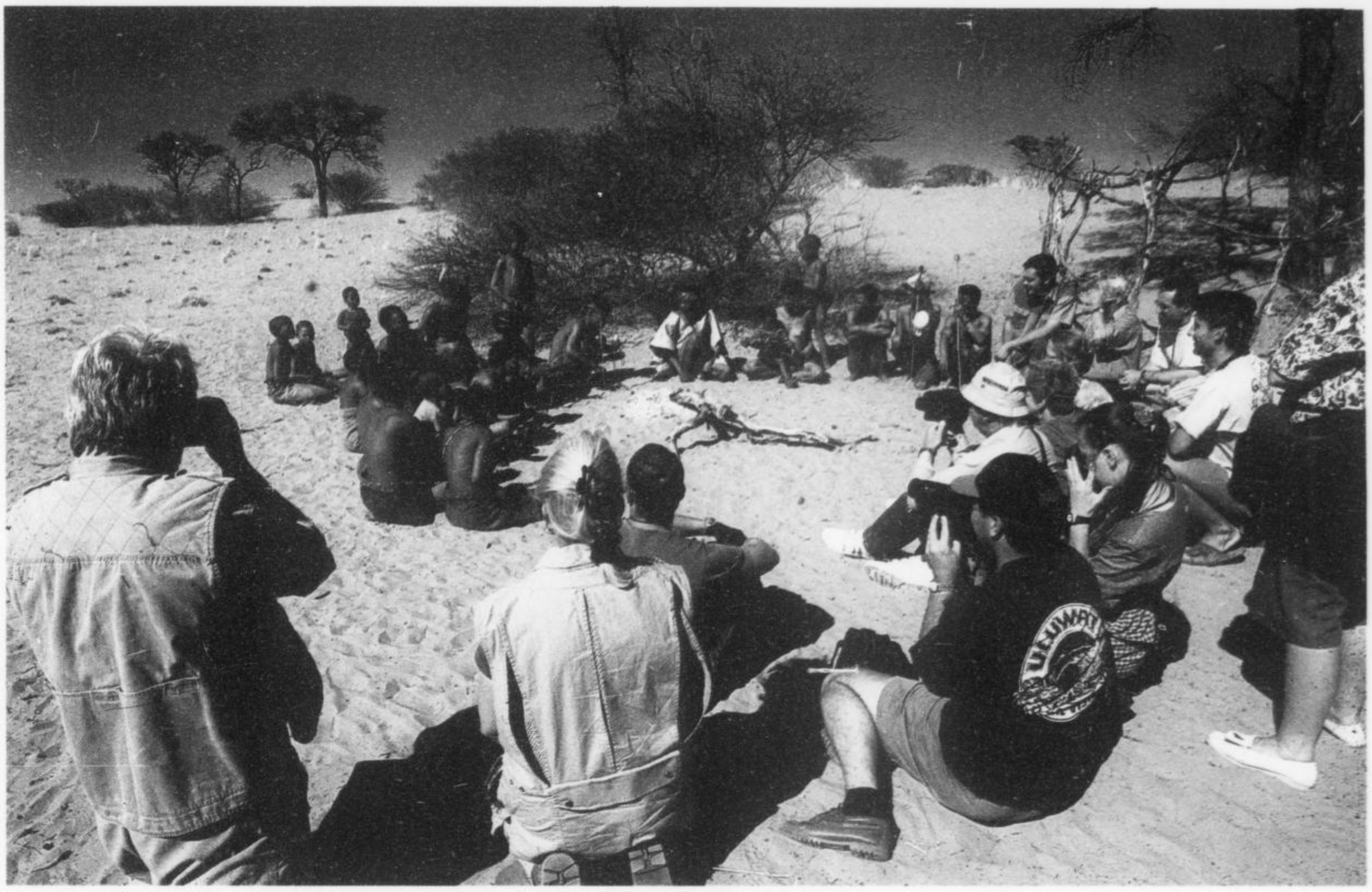
The attraction of generating hard currency relatively quickly and often with minimal investment compared to, say, establishing a manufacturing industry, is a powerful argument for governments of both developed and developing nations seeking to develop tourism.

However, the various levels of tourism-related

Choose your companions, then choose your road.

Arabic proverb

Director of the Centre for Travel and Tourism at the University of Northumbria, UK



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A meeting of two worlds: a group of tourists surrounding Bushmen in Namibia's Kalahari desert.

cultural conflict force us—or should force us—to question the very foundations of cultural tourism.

Active collaboration with local cultures must be at the centre of any efforts to promote sustainable cultural tourism. However, to date the extent of collaboration remains narrow and almost a token afterthought following environmental and economic considerations. One study has shown that in New Zealand Maori economic involvement in the tourism industry amounted to less than one per cent.

Though definitions might differ, I would argue that at its heart sustainable cultural tourism recognizes the value of cultural diversity, and needs to provide local cultures with a forum in which they can participate in decisions that affect the future of their culture. In other words, host cultures should be empowered to say no or yes to tourism, and in the latter case, to set guidelines for tourism if they so wish.

There are examples where the redistribution and ownership of resources are being addressed in tourism in such a way that indigenous peoples are beginning to move from being the providers of cultural experiences for tourists, to having an ownership and management role in tourism. (See pages 30-33).

Such examples are encouraging, though still few and far between, and even then, largely shaped by first world value systems. It is the allocation of cultural rights and subsequent respect for and protection of those rights which underpin sustainable development and should underpin the notion of sustainable tourism. Those cultural rights need to be accompanied by rights in other areas. Armed with land, resources and intellectual property rights, communities and cultures can not only influence the direction and pace of tourism developments, but also provide or withhold consent for them.

Except for some rare cases, I am not at all confident that at present we are on the right track at all. The tourism industry and the governments and organizations which empower it cannot, and arguably would not, engage in dramatic structural and intellectual reshuffling which would put the notion of cultural consent at the centre of a collaborative process.

Under the current self-regulatory approach, the industry can encourage local community participation in the management of tourism resources and can aim to include non-traditional decision-makers in the development process. The problem is that it does things in a way that is designed to serve both the economic goals and desires of the tourism industry, and the dominant first world value systems which it represents.

One of the implications of a sustainable tourism constructed around the idea of cultural consent is that tourism may be rejected outright. More likely is that via more equitable collaborations, the nature, extent and type of tourism development will be adopted to suit the cultural needs of the host community. Either way the challenge is to establish mechanisms which will involve local cultures and transfer to them the right to decide on the type and extent of tourism which *they* wish within the economic, environmental and cultural limits which they have set. ■

•••

● An international conference, Tourism 2000: Time for Celebration, is being organized to address sustainable tourism issues. It will be held September 2-7, 2000 at Sheffield, UK. For information, please contact mike.robinson@unn.ac.uk.

The pioneers

Roy Malkin

Once upon a time there were travellers.... Then, in the 19th century, a ferment of social and economic change ushered in the tourist revolution

Art, like other potent substances, should be consumed in moderation. This conclusion is to be drawn from the experience of the French novelist Stendhal (Marie-Henri Beyle, 1783-1842) who, while visiting Florence in 1817, emerged from the church of Santa Croce in an extremely shaky condition.

"I was already in a kind of ecstasy," he wrote, "by the idea of being in Florence, and the neighbourhood of the great men whose tombs I had just seen. Absorbed in the contemplation of sublime beauty, I saw it in close-up, I touched it so to speak. I had reached that point of emotion where the heavenly sensations provided by the fine arts meet passionate feelings. On leaving Santa Croce, I had palpitations; all the life went out of me, as I walked I was afraid I would fall."

This is the first description of what Florentine psychiatrist Graziella Magherini named "the Stendhal syndrome", a profound psychological disturbance triggered by exposure to a work of art. Symptoms may include dizzy spells, loss of the sense of identity and orientation, depression and even physical exhaustion. This kind of cultural overdose, for which the only known cure is rest, reportedly affects a handful of foreign tourists in Florence each year. According to Magherini, who has written a book on the subject,[1] the ingredients are "an impressionable personality, the stress of travel and the encounter with a city like Florence haunted by ghosts of the great, death and the perspective of history."

Tourism picks up steam

The Stendhal syndrome is not the only experience shared by modern cultural tourists and wayfarers of the past.

In fact, there is nothing new about sightseeing. Travel guides proliferated in Greek Antiquity, and the Hellenistic world's taste for tourist attractions (*mirabilia*) was reflected in the invention of the Seven Wonders of the World.

Neither is souvenir hunting an invention of modern travellers. The Greeks who consulted the Oracle at Delphi or Dodona, like the medieval Christian pilgrims who trod the highways and byways of Europe, bore relics in which there was a profitable trade.

The dehumanizing effects of modern travel? Long before cars and Concordes John Ruskin condemned 30-m.p.h train travel as "a matter . . . to be got through as soon as possible. It transmutes a man from a traveller into a living parcel." And even before that, William Wordsworth had decried "pilgrims of fashion hurried along in their carriages".

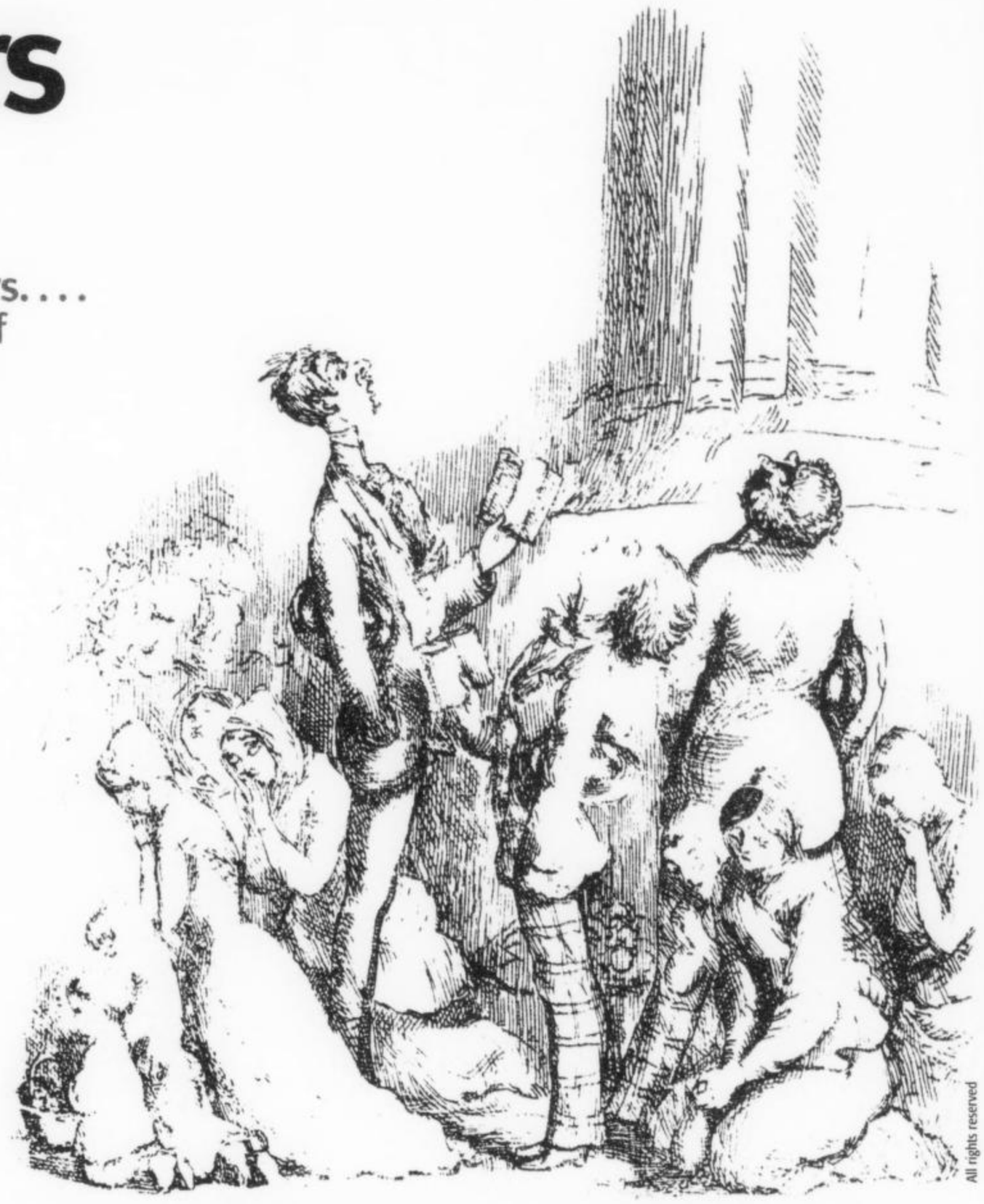
The tourist as a figure for satire? How about Mrs Clack in Samuel Foote's play *A Trip to Calais* (1776), who was amazed at how well the French spoke French?

Interactive tourist guides? As early as the 1840s Karl Baedeker was urging readers of his handbooks to write in with their suggestions for future issues.

The list could go on.

Who was the first cultural tourist? Ulysses? Alexander the Great? Julius Caesar? Perhaps they, like the Venetian merchant Marco Polo and the great voyagers of the European Renaissance who journeyed "to make Christians and seek spices", were essentially business travellers. The great 14th-century Arab traveller Ibn Batutah is a stronger candidate. He covered some 120,000 km in the Islamic countries and went as far afield from his birthplace, Tangier, as China and Sumatra, "for the joy of learning about new countries and new peoples".

More recent cultural travellers were the sprigs of the English aristocracy who went on the Grand Tour of continental Europe, a flexible itinerary



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In this 19th-century satirical drawing, women and children kneel in prayer at the feet of three sightseers gaping at the vaulted roof of a European cathedral.

UNESCO Courier journalist

usually including visits to Paris and the main Italian cities. According to Thomas Nugent, author of *The Grand Tour* (1749), this was a custom "visibly tending to enrich the mind with knowledge, to rectify the judgment, to remove the prejudices of education, to compose the outward manners, and in a word form the complete gentleman". Others were sceptical about this optimistic ideology.

In the late 18th century the industrial revolution created a new market for travel: improved roads dramatically shortened journey times; industrial expansion generated greater wealth and a new reservoir of potential travellers in towns and cities; time-regulated forms of work brought with them the concepts of leisure and vacation. The modern tourist is a child of the steam age in Europe and North America.

Steam-driven vessels began to link Dover and Calais in 1821, and by 1840 an estimated 100,000 travellers were using them annually. In the same year the steamship *Britannia* crossed the Atlantic in 14 days. Steamers started to ply the Rhine in 1828, the Rhône and the Danube a few years later. Above all, the spread of railway systems speeded up, democratized and extended the range of travel.

Going by the book

The new tourists needed more guidance, solicitude and organization than their more independent and privileged predecessors. By the mid-19th century a tourist industry comprising travel agents, guidebooks, package tours, hotels, railways and timetables, duly emerged to provide them with protected modes of travel. Three key figures in this process were the British and German publishers, respectively John Murray (1808-1892) and Karl Baedeker (1801-1859), and the British travel agent Thomas Cook (1808-1892).

Dozens of volumes of travel writing existed to accompany the Grand Tourist, but they had tended to be rambling and opinionated accounts of their authors' own travels. For the new kind of traveller, such idiosyncratic writings became obsolete. In the 1840s, they were replaced by red-covered Murrays and Baedekers, which were standardized in format, regularly updated, and designed to fit easily into hand or pocket. Baedeker, whose aim was to give travellers enough information to dispense with paid (human) guides, made incognito journeys to check the reliability of his information. He also used "stars" to rank sights and hotels. In fact the red guides, like some of their modern successors, have been criticized for presenting a monumental heritage of starred attractions divorced from the real life of the land and people that had created them and gave them their meaning.

Baedeker's publications, which covered most of Europe, became so popular that Kaiser Wilhelm of Germany was quoted as saying that he stationed himself at a particular palace window each noon because "It's written in Baedeker that I watch the changing of the guard from that window, and the people have come to expect it."

The emblematic figure of a tourist industry organized with bureaucratic efficiency to satisfy a (relatively) democratized tourist market is Thomas Cook, who saw tourism as opening unprecedented opportunities for people to enrich themselves culturally and morally by excursions to other countries. After starting out in 1841 by organizing cheap train travel for English working men, he soon went upmarket and by 1865 was escorting to Italy "clergymen, physicians, bankers, civil engineers and merchants."

Cook was often referred to as a great general, the "Napoleon of excursions", and military and imperialistic overtones of modern tourism (invasions, armies, hordes) accompanied his career. Tourism, some argued, was like imperialism: it might bring money and commercial benefits but it would also sustain a system of exploitation and oppression. Cook's firm became, for instance, a crucial agent of British military and administrative authority in Egypt. It was said that "the nominal suzerain of Egypt is the Sultan; its real suzerain is Lord Cromer. Its nominal governor is the Khedive; its real governor . . . is Thomas Cook and Son".

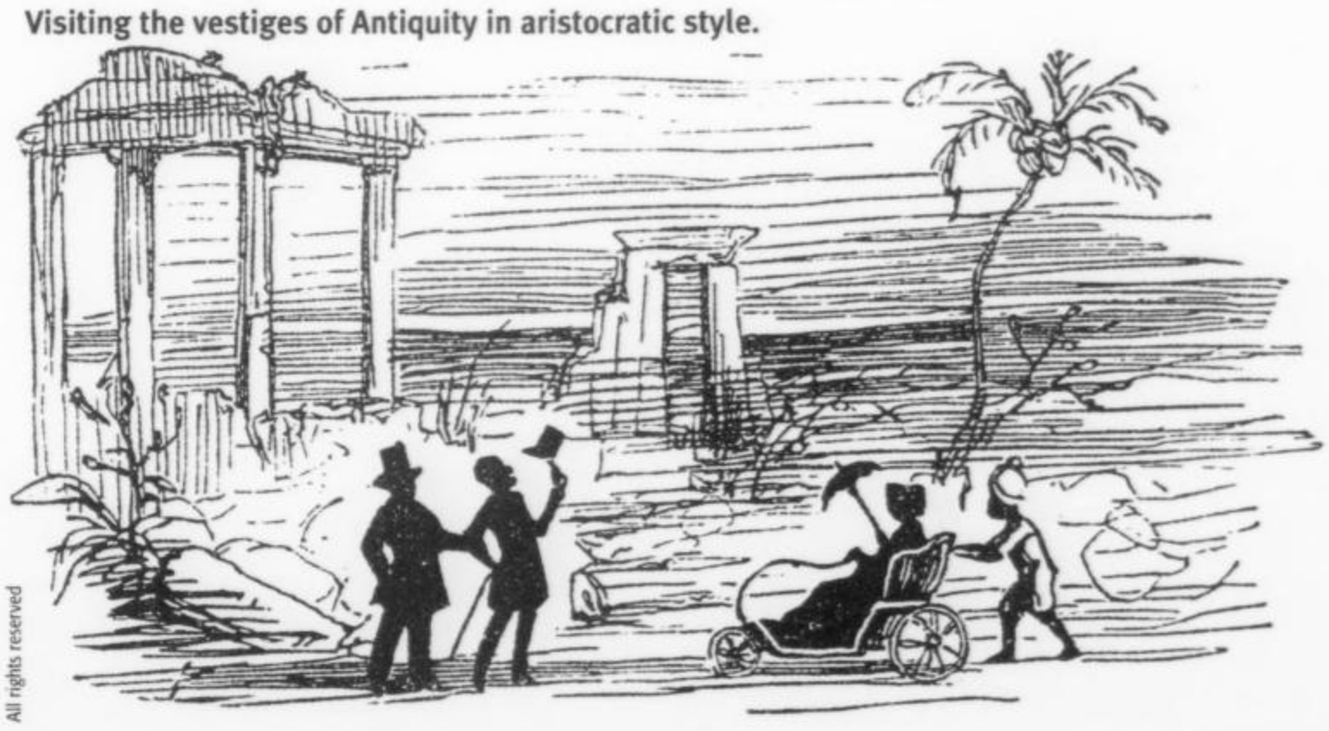
Cook and his "excursionists" were attacked by traditionalists as hurried observers, visible representatives of a modernity that was bringing intrusive crowds into formerly self-sufficient villages, towns and regions and weaving them into a growing web of alien economic and social forces. More scurrilously it was implied that the new tourists, "red-nosed people carrying red books in their hands", were, almost by virtue of travelling in a certain organized way, not only incapable of aesthetic response but in some way responsible for profaning the sanctity of the monuments they visited. Speed was associated with superficiality.

Which brings us back to the Stendhal syndrome. Magherini has described how contact with artistic masterpieces can bring to the surface repressed emotional experiences, thus deepening self-knowledge. In other words it is a reminder that the longest journeys are still, as they always were and will be, in the mind. ■

1. *La Sindrome di Stendhal*, Ponte alle Grazie publishers, Florence, second edition, 1996.

> Journeys, like artists, are born and not made. A thousand differing circumstances contribute to them, few of them willed or determined by the will.
>
> **Lawrence Durrell, British author (1912-1990)**

Visiting the vestiges of Antiquity in aristocratic style.



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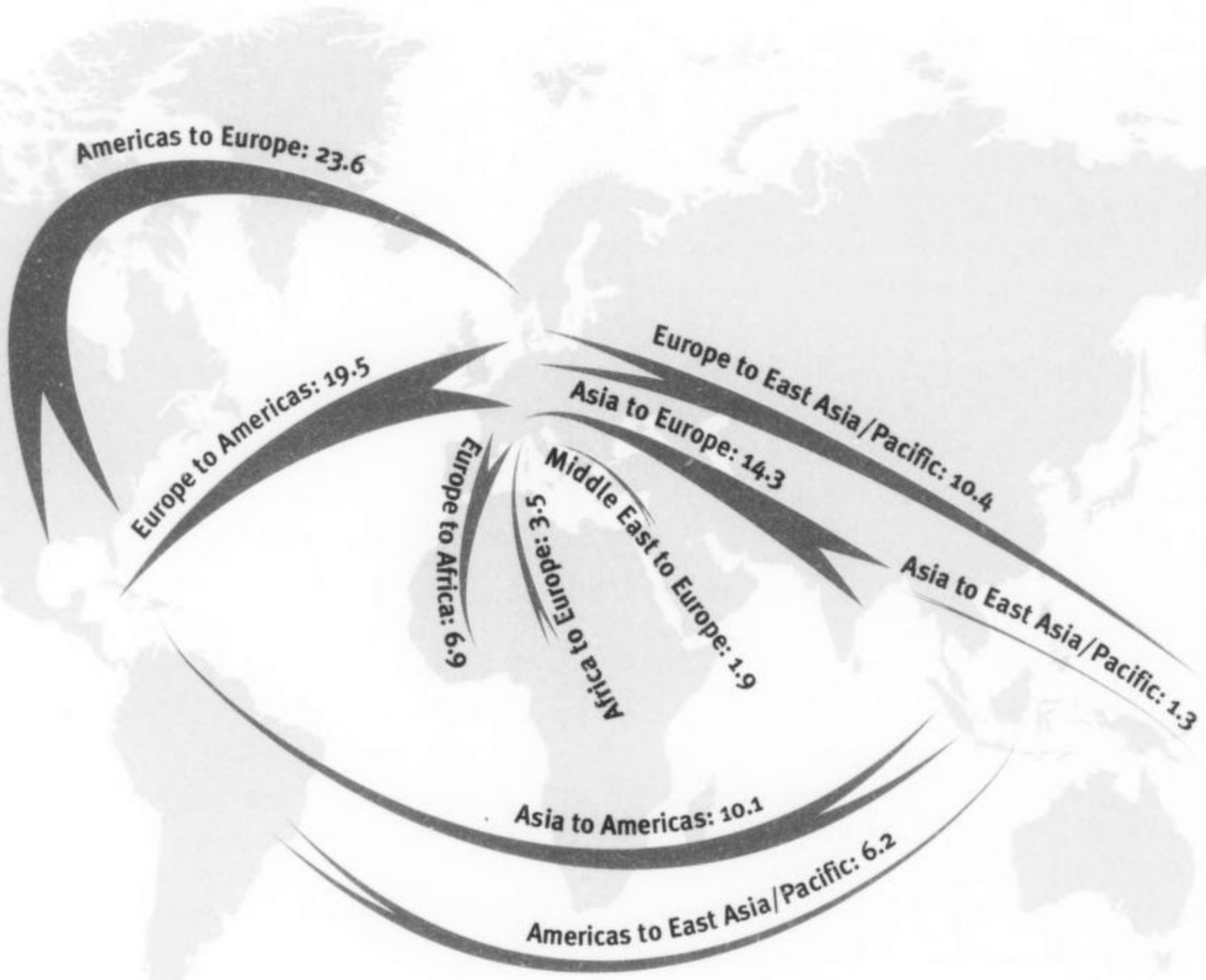
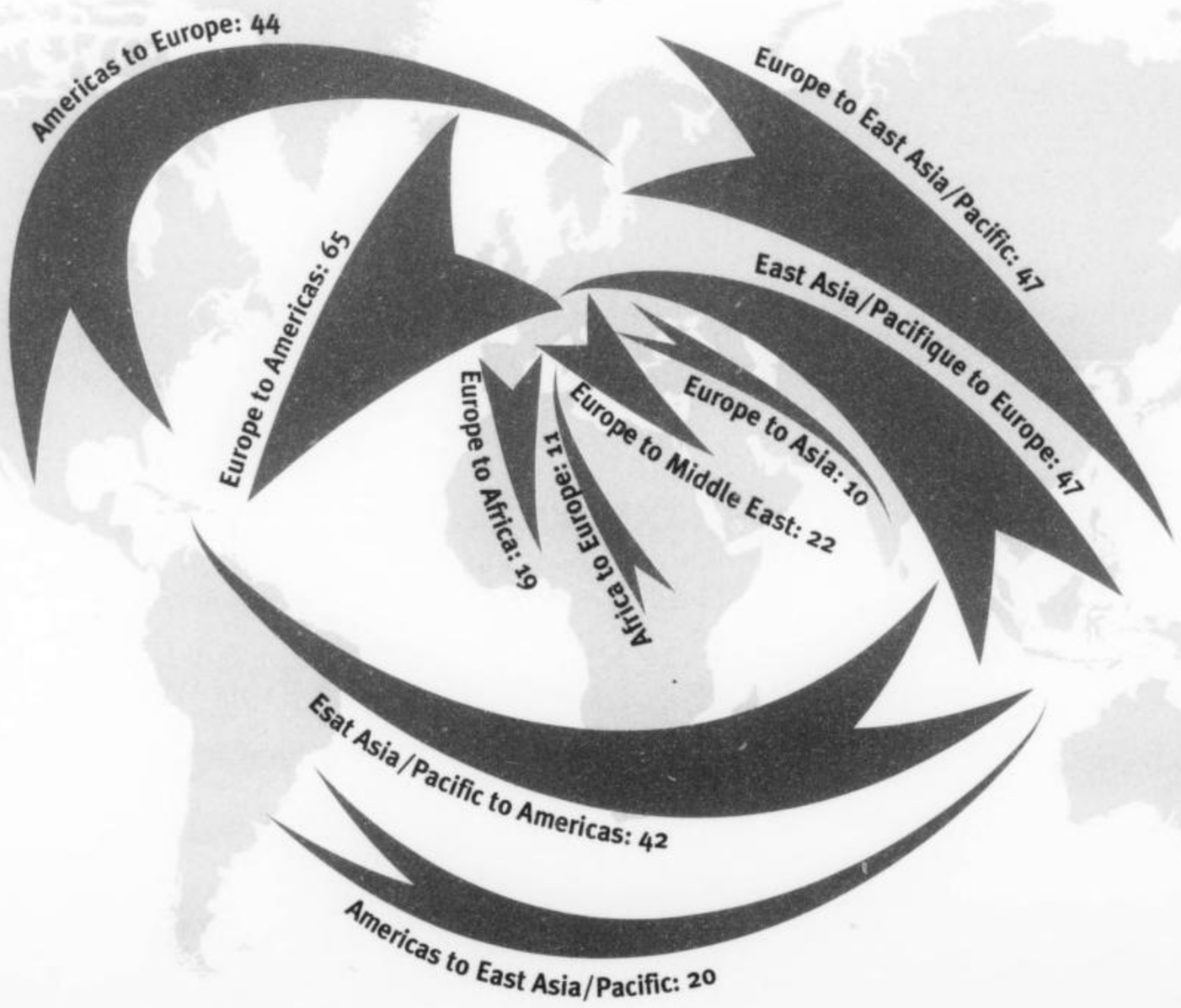
The globalization of tourism


Americas to Europe: 23.6
Europe to Americas: 19.5
Europe to East Asia/Pacific: 10.4
Asia to Europe: 14.3
Asia to East Asia/Pacific: 1.3
Europe to Africa: 6.9
Africa to Europe: 3.5
Middle East to Europe: 1.9
Asia to Americas: 10.1
Americas to East Asia/Pacific: 6.2

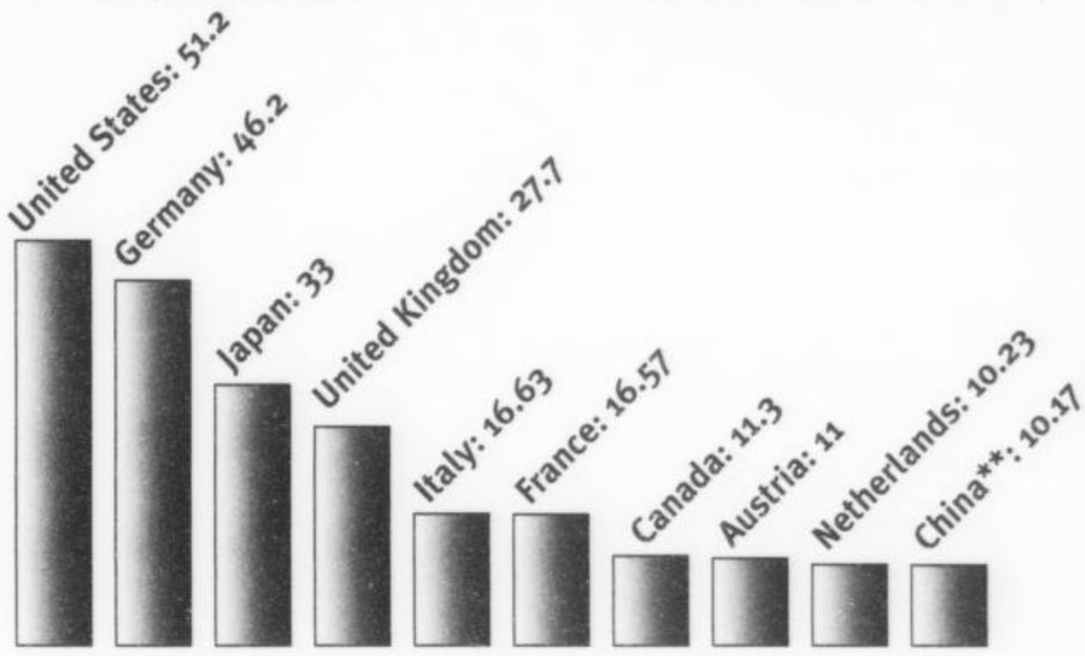
Major intercontinental tourism flows (millions)

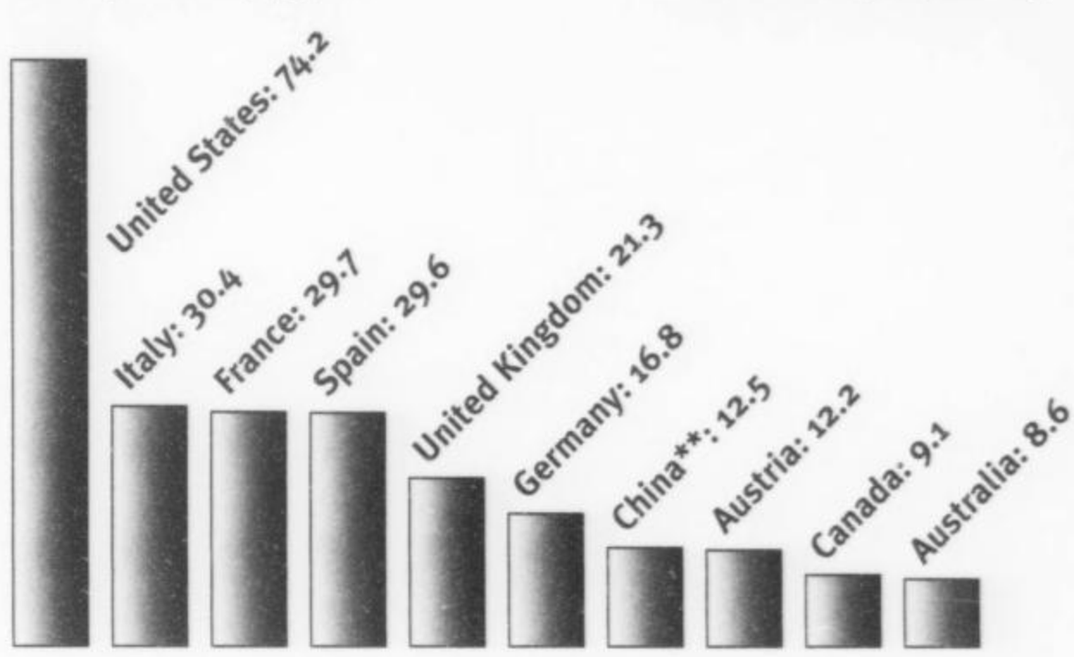
1997

2020


Americas to Europe: 44
Europe to Americas: 65
Europe to East Asia/Pacific: 47
East Asia/Pacifique to Europe: 47
Europe to Asia: 10
Europe to Middle East: 22
Europe to Africa: 19
Africa to Europe: 13
Esat Asia/Pacific to Americas: 42
Americas to East Asia/Pacific: 20

Source: World Tourism Organization





* Excluding international transport. ** Excluding Hong Kong. Source: World Tourism Organization

If the World Tourism Organization's forecasts are on target, international tourist arrivals will climb from the present 625 million a year to 1.6 billion in 2020. By this date, travellers will spend over US$2 trillion, (against US$445 billion today), making tourism the world's leading industry. These projections are based on annual growth rates of 4.3% for arrivals and 6.7% for spending, well above the maximum expected expansion of 3% per year in world GDP. Already in 1997, tourism receipts accounted for a little over 8% of the world's exports in goods and almost 34% of global services exports.

Electronic technology is facilitating this growth by offering access to fare and hotel information and online reservation services. Despite a modest annual growth rate (3.1%), Europe will remain, by far, the most popular destination (it can expect 717 million international arrivals in 2020, double the 1998 figure), though its market share will decline from 59 to 45%. Growth on the continent will be led by Central and Eastern European countries, where arrivals are expected to increase by 4.8% per year. At the same time, almost half of the world's tourists will be coming from Europe. Given this dominance, it is not surprising to find that six European countries count among the top ten tourism earners and spenders. The United States holds first place in both categories.

With a 7% per annum growth in international arrivals, the East Asia/Pacific region will overtake the Americas as the second most popular destination, holding a 27% market share in 2020 against 18% by the Americas. But the industry will also be doing its utmost to court the Asian traveller, since East Asia /Pacific is forecast to become the world's second most important generator of tourists, with a 7% annual growth rate, pushing the Americas into third position. China is expected to become the fourth largest source of tourists on the world market, while it is not even among the first twenty today. Both arrivals to and departures from Africa (and especially Southern Africa), the Middle East and South Asia are expected to grow by above 5% per year.

While France has held its place as the top destination throughout the 1990s, it will be dethroned in the next decades, with China (excluding Hong Kong) expected to top the list by 2020 even though it is not even featured on it today. Also making an entry into the top ten are the Russian Federation, Hong Kong and the Czech Republic.

Despite this growth forecast, tourism is and will remain the privilege of a few: WTO forecasts that only 7% of the world population will travel abroad by 2020—that's double the 1996 figure (3.5%). ■

The destinations

Country/Territory	Arrivals* (millions)	1998
France	70	
Spain	47.7	
United States	47.1	
Italy	34.8	
United Kingdom	25.5	
China**	24	
Mexico	19.3	
Poland	18.8	
Canada	18.7	
Austria	17.3	

*International, excluding same-day visitors. **Excluding Hong Kong.
Source: World Tourism Organization

2020

Country/Territory	Arrivals* (millions)
China*	137.1
United States	102.4
France	93.3
Spain	71
Hong Kong, China**	59.3
Italy	52.9
United Kingdom	52.8
Mexico	48.9
Russian Fed.	47.1
Czech Rep.	44

*Excluding Hong Kong.**Hong Kong has been a Special Administrative Region of China since 1997.
Source: World Tourism Organization

The Himalayas: masked dances and mixed blessings

Myra Shackley

As growing numbers of travellers seek to catch a glimpse of monastic life and traditions on the rooftop of the world, tensions are starting to arise in some communities while others are reaping the fruits of tourism

Once a region that chiefly attracted inveterate trekkers and climbers, the Himalayas are now drawing an increasing number of visitors who place a high premium on personal enrichment through contact with other cultures, a trend that is not without mirroring Buddhism's growing appeal in the west. Such journeys might involve visiting religious sites, attending festivals or gaining a better understanding of the workings of Himalayan communities.

To date, the impact of international tourism on the region has chiefly focused on environmental issues, such as deforestation and pollution, which tend to be more outwardly visible than the effects on local societies and their cultures. But as tourism to the region continues to grow—it has doubled over the past ten years to an annual two-and-a-half million visitors—tensions are beginning to emerge between the conflicting aims of international visitors and host communities, particularly at the mainly Buddhist Himalayan monasteries, temples and festivals.

Once a major force in keeping isolated communities together, these festivals, characterized by spectacular masked dances, have in many cases become cultural products for sale to tourists. In recent years, their popularity has often resulted in modification of traditional practices, decreased local interest and participation, commercialization and economic exploitation. And it is difficult to see how these changes can be reversed.

In the hope of increasing foreign revenue, the Himalayan governments are continuing to open new areas to tourism each year, generally without properly-developed management plans or any idea of carrying capacity. Since the mid-1990s, India has opened parts of Arunachal Pradesh and new areas of Himachal Pradesh. Nepal has permitted cross-border trekking to Tibet on its northwest frontier and allowed freer access to its peripheral Buddhist kingdoms. Bhutan is the only country in the region that has opted for a quota system, which is in fact seldom filled. In a sign of further opening to foreign visitors, the government of Bhutan has increased private-sector participation in the industry, while maintaining strict control over the sector.

In Nepal, the rapid growth of trekking tourism has resulted in better internal air services, the opening of new local airports and the building of roads, giving large numbers of visitors access to monasteries and religious sites in very remote areas of the country. A well-heeled traveller wishing to visit the Khumbu or Mustang areas of Himalayan Nepal, for example, can now charter a helicopter to do so, reducing his travelling time from several weeks to a few hours. But however they are reached, the demand to visit Buddhist monastic sites, and in particular, to attend masked dance festivals, is on the rise, reinforced by constant media attention in the West, from television documentaries to advertising commercials.

Such festivals, generally held on dates determined by the Tibetan lunar calendar, usually last for several days and typically include at least one day of masked ritual dances commemorating specific religious events and performed in the monastery courtyard by monks. Some tour companies offer treks carefully timed to

Professor of Culture Resource Management at Nottingham Business School (UK) and author of *Visitor Management; Case Studies from World Heritage Sites* (Butterworth-Heinemann, 1998).

© Myra Shackley

Young monks perform during the Tenchi festival of Lo Manthang in Nepal. Revenue from the event supports the monastic school.

coincide with the festivals. The easier the monastery is to reach, the more visitors will come, which increases the likelihood that their presence will alter the festival in some way. Typical problems include inconsiderate photography and local people being crowded out by visitors, although this is sometimes encouraged by monastic authorities who exploit the chance to make a little money. Selling tickets to tourists and ensuring that they get priority seating can generate much-needed currency but also cause local resentment. Even the structure of the festivals can be altered as a result, sometimes by programme changes where dances are shortened to accommodate westerner's low boredom thresholds. Another unwelcome by-product has been the escalation of a black market in religious artwork (particularly in small, portable statues and *thankas* (religious paintings on silk) and at least one monastery on the tourist beat has had to use its tourism revenues to install security screening.

A tourist-driven religious revival

It is not just the Buddhist festivals that attract visitors. In lowland areas of Nepal, Hindu festivals and masked Hindu dances at Bhaktapur also draw tourists, most of whom will combine such a trip with visits to the World Heritage sites of the Kathmandu valley. In the western Himalayan kingdom of Ladakh, most people are Mahayana Buddhists with beliefs consisting of a mixture of Tantric and animistic pre-Buddhist Bon influences. Their festivals take place in the bleak winter months when villagers gather together. Stalls and a market develop around the *gompas* (fortress monasteries), highlighting the festival's role in uniting scattered communities, and masked dances are also performed. While such events have been visited by westerners for many years, a more recent development is the "Festival of Ladakh" held during the first week of August and organized by the tourist office rather than monastic authorities, purely to attract visitors.

In Bhutan the state religion is the Drukpa Kagyupa school of Tantric Buddhism with around 5,000 monks accommodated in fortress-monasteries call *dzongs* that form the kingpin of all tourist itineraries. Their annual masked dance festivals (*tsechu*) are the only time visitors may enter many of the *dzongs*. A few years ago, several of the monasteries were placed off-limits after complaints over abusive photography. The effect on the Bhutanese tourism industry was so severe that most have now re-opened. The dates and locations of festivals are now available on the WWW and tours may be booked via the internet.

While the incident points to a growing dependence on tourist revenue, in some cases, increased prosperity as a result of tourism has led to no less than a religious revival. Tengboche monastery in the Solu area of the Sherpa country in Nepal is now a prime tourist destination, housing an active community of over 40 monks. Yet the monastery was almost deserted in the 1970s when the monks left to work in trekking tourism, and destroyed by fire in 1988. Masked dances were only introduced here in 1942 but are now seen annually by hundreds of tourists—more than 80 per cent of the audience may be foreign—producing revenue to keep the monastery going and expand its activities, which now include a solar-heated lodge and helicopter landing pad. Charging visitors for admission either to monasteries or to masked dances may also generate funding for essential replacement and repairs to costumes and masks, as well as for monastic education programmes.

But local complaints about the bad behaviour of visitors to sacred sites are increasingly common, and it seems possible that a tolerance threshold has been reached. Some tour operators have started to publish booklets about festivals, describing the rituals and giving visitors tips on etiquette, such as where to stand, and when and when not to take photos. As tourism to the region increases—in areas not controlled by a quota system, annual increases of 10 to 20 per cent can be anticipated—visitors must learn to better align their expectations and behaviour with those of local communities. Not doing so can produce resentment—elderly people in Mustang in the Tibetan-speaking Buddhist kingdom of Northern Nepal attribute the drought that has afflicted their kingdom for the past four years to the malign presence of foreign tourists. ■

> Halfway up the Himalayas, a giant twice as high as the Alps, are orchards like our own. There are cool forests, and the climate near the lofty peaks is so mild that there are flowers which in our land would not survive 10,000 feet below.
>
> **Jules Michelet, French historian and writer (1798-1874)**

In Nepal, remote areas are opening up to trekking tourism, a major source of revenue for the country.

© Lynn Johnson/Black Star/Studio B, Paris

Masters in their own tepees

Garry Marchant

In Canada and Australia, aboriginal communities are taking control of tourism in their homelands.

© J.van Hasselt/Sygma, Paris

An art gallery in Darwin, Australia, proudly spells out its aboriginal ownership.

In the frozen wastelands of the Canadian Arctic, several *kabloonas* (Inuit for strangers) clumsily hack out huge ice blocks and piece them together to make an igloo under the eyes of an Inuit guide. In an Australian desert, a young city woman learns from locals to savour an aboriginal delicacy, beetle larva called witchetty grub. A small band of visitors gathers in a rainforest park on Canada's Pacific south-west coast, listening to a native tour guide explain how to read totem pole carvings with their bogeywomen, thunderbirds and other mythological characters.

These scenes reflect the growing tourist demand to discover and experience aboriginal cultures. At the same time, they tell a story about control over the growing aboriginal tourism niche market. From Iqaluit, the capital of the new Canadian territory of Nunavut, to Kalgoorlie, Western Australia, native entrepreneurs themselves are increasingly showing off their cultures—and profiting from it. This stands in contrast to many other parts of the world where indigenous communities have little control or even say in tourist inflows that are having sometimes huge impacts on their cultures and societies.

"While we have played a role in the tourism industry for years, we were somewhat marginalized," says Barry Parker, president of the Canadian National Aboriginal Tourism Association (CNATA). "We were thought of in terms of *pow wows* or other cultural celebrations, or as 'wilderness guides' for hunting and fishing."

Native entrepreneurs no longer merely stage abbreviated, simplified dance shows for tour groups which quickly move on to other ersatz attractions, or souvenir shops selling mass-produced trinkets. Today, indigenous populations are providing transportation services and accommodations while opening galleries, restaurants, theatres and even their own homes.

Not all aboriginal communities in Canada or Australia welcome tourism. However, many see it as an important source of income. CNATA is "bottom line oriented," says Parker. "Our business is job creation and revenue creation." Promoters say tourism also allows aboriginals to teach others about their traditions, thus helping strengthen indigenous culture.

Aboriginal Business Canada, a federal government agency, cites tourism development as one of its top three priorities. There are now about 1,000 Canadian aboriginal tourism businesses (i.e., businesses that are at least 51 per cent owned or controlled by native people) generating up to some $200 million in revenue per year, according to the federal government's Department of Indian Affairs. These companies provide about 15,000 jobs seasonally and 7,500 year round.

Indigenous tourism has become so economically important to both countries that governments and aboriginal peoples have established official groups to promote and control the industry. Besides the CNATA, these include Aboriginal Tourism Australia, the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Tourism Industry Strategy (NATSITIS) and Aboriginal Tourism British Columbia (ATBC). Even Nunavut, the new territory in northern Canada, has its own tourism body, promoting the Eskimo (Inuit) culture.

Fixing snakebite with seaweed

Australia has about 200 aboriginal-operated tourism businesses, according to Graeme Priestley, who manages the federal government's section responsible for developing aboriginal tourism. These businesses are generating almost $20 million in revenue per year, with sales in indigenous arts and crafts amounting to an estimated $130 million annually, according to the Australian Office of National Tourism. Priestley believes that indigenous tourism could be a much more significant business opportunity for aboriginal people.

The growing revenues going back to their communities mark progress for those aborigines who want to encourage tourism. But by their standards, more can be done. The Canadian Tourism Commission estimates that if aboriginal peoples shared in the tourism industry in proportion to their pop-

Paris-based travel writer

ulation—four per cent of Canada's total—aboriginal tourism would bring in about $1 billion annually—five times what it does today—and provide as many as 40,000 jobs.

Likewise, despite progress, Australia's aborigines still face several major obstacles to developing tourism. To begin with, aboriginal land claims must be legally resolved. Without legal land titles, aboriginal people find it difficult to secure bank loans to start up their businesses. Also in short supply are the business skills needed to successfully run a company. To try to fill these gaps, the government has worked with aboriginal authorities to set up a range of supportive measures—from individual grants to training programmes.

Hazel Douglas, a member of the Guguyalanji tribe in the far north of Australia's Queensland, is fully aware of the difficulties of breaking into the tourism trade. "When I started my business [five years ago], people said, 'Oh, she's just an aboriginal lady, she'll only last a couple of days,' " Douglas told *The Australian* newspaper. Today, her award-winning business, Native Guide Safari Tours, leads groups across the rugged terrain of the Daintree rainforest, a World Heritage site, and Cape Tribulation National Park. While recounting legends and explaining traditional culture, she takes her groups into the bush to show them how to eat the thirst-quenching abdomens of live green ants—high in vitamin C. She also teaches them how to fix snakebite with seaweed and how to listen to the bird calls near the river to know whether a crocodile lies in wait. For Douglas, the tour is more than just a business. "The most important thing is to educate people about aboriginal culture and to preserve it," she says.

'There are things that are not for others to see or share. Mainstream tourism needs to know this to ensure appropriate, authentic products are developed and marketed with cultural sensitivity.'

Part of this educational task lies in dealing with the stereotypes tourists expect to see during their visits. "People still have the impression that we are living in the past," says Jeff Watts, a member of the Tseshaht tribe in Canada who started his native culture tour in Vancouver last year. When tourists ask Watts to take them to a native Indian village, he teases them by suggesting they hail down the next covered wagon.

The aboriginal tourism offering is considerable. In Canada, the possibilities include digging into traditional indigenous fare at a Haida longhouse restaurant serving the likes of toasted seaweed, wild Pacific sea asparagus, goat ribs and caribou; living with Inuit families at an igloo camp or spending a week on an Indian reserve sleeping in a longhouse or tepee; searching for shaggy musk-ox; or perhaps learning drum dances and native games. In Australia, one can take tours to aboriginal homelands to learn how to use a boomerang, listen to native dreamtime legends, visit an aboriginal emu farm or take a day trip in the scrubs to look for spiny ant eaters and kangaroo.

Spirituality is not for sale

In many cases visitors to aboriginal lands have to learn to live like locals, far away from modern conveniences. For example, in Canada, tourists may have to accept caribou hairs on their bannock bread, while in remote parts of Australia, accommodation is in cement floor huts with only basic washing facilities.

There is often a clash between expectations and reality, with the result that sometimes tourists are disappointed while their hosts are astounded by outsiders' perceptions. For example, one tour company reportedly received a complaint from a South Australian tourist that the aborigines in the Manyalluk community wore T-shirts and shorts instead of loincloths.

Many aboriginal people are aware of possible negative effects of tourism. In some instances entire communities are off limits. In other cases, native communities are controlling development, putting sacred sites off limits and preventing public access to some ceremonies.

"Elders generally welcome the opportunity to share aspects of their cultures with others, but are adamant that their spirituality is not for sale," says CNATA's Parker. "There are things that are not for others to see or share. Mainstream tourism needs to know this to ensure appropriate, authentic products are developed and marketed with cultural sensitivity."

Even more important than the impact of tourism on the land is its effect on the people. Says Parker: "No one wants to feel like they are fish in a fish bowl or have people invade their space." ■

Travel broadens the mind: one leaves behind the prejudices of one's own country, and one is hardly qualified to take on those of foreigners.

Michel de Montesquieu, French writer and philosopher (1689-1755)

In Kaan, an Amerindian village in British Columbia (Canada), visitors can learn about the significance of totems from local guides.

© John Warden/Sunset, Paris

Ecotourism without tears

Sylvie Blangy

Responsible for the ecotourism department at Seca, a French consulting firm specializing in the protection and management of natural sites

From Ecuador to Namibia, indigenous communities are striking up innovative partnerships with tour operators to promote ecotourism on their own terms—a strategy to bring in revenue and protect their culture and environment

In the heart of Ecuador's rain forest, forty-five minutes by foot away from their own village, a small group of Huaorani, an Amazon indigenous people, built a palm-thatched roof cabin for eight. Fearing that too much tourism could disrupt their traditional hunter-gatherer lifestyle and bring in unwelcome consumer habits, the Huaorani only accept one group of visitors per month, for two to six days.

But during this time, they are given full attention. Community representatives greet visitors upon their arrival and discuss some of their people's social and environmental concerns. During this first meeting, a per-night fee is paid to the head of the community for each visitor and the money is distributed evenly among all the families. Salaries for the various jobs (guides, maintenance, canoe paddlers etc) are calculated by doubling what a person would earn as a labourer for an oil company, the main alternative source of income. Huaorani guides accompany visitors on hikes and teach them about medicinal plants, the rainforest's ecology, their spiritual relationship with the environment, and local handicrafts. At the end of their trip, visitors are invited to raise awareness in their own countries about the Huaorani's efforts to defend their land and culture. This initiative has led to donations that have financed training workshops, high frequency radios and solar panels.

The fact that such a vulnerable population living in a region prone to outside encroachment—from unscrupulous jungle tour operators to petroleum companies—managed to set up a project that won a prize for the best ecotourism programme at the 1998 Berlin Tourism Expo is not a product of chance. It took nine months of planning and orientation meetings for the Huaorani to finetune a tourism strategy, a task carried out hand in hand with TROPIC Ecological Adventures, a tour operator with a long experience in working with indigenous communities, notably on bringing the Huaorani's problems with the oil industry to international attention. Not only has this community defined its own rules for tourism, but it has gained indispensable exposure on the international travel market through a fruitful business partnership.

Caught snapping. Trekkers make their way through the rainforest in Venezuela's Bolivar State.

© David Hoffman/Still Pictures, London

A strong conservationist slant

Just as importantly, the Huaorani have opted for a self-managed community-based activity that represents a potential economic alternative to oil and logging. Many indigenous communities see ecotourism as the most rational way of protecting the rainforest, creating jobs for the young and generating revenue for education, community health and transportation. They also see it as a way of maintaining their cultural integrity. Ecuador is a veritable laboratory for community-based ecotourism, with some environmentalists contending that revenues earned from tourism in the Amazon rainforest could eventually outstrip oil earnings.

The Cofan indigenous people have developed a fairly sophisticated management system in Zabalo, under the guidance of Randy Borman, the son of an American missionary who grew up with the Cofan and has played a leading role in resisting the efforts of oil companies to prospect on their territory. In 1992, Borman established a community-run company in Zabalo with ten Cofan associates who invested their labour in building guest cabins. Other community members are paid for doing various jobs while a small co-operative craft store also brings in income. These various initiatives provide the Cofan of Zabalo with an estimated $500 annually per person. The project also has a strong conservationist slant: the community has defined separate zones for hunting and ecotourism, with fines levied on

© David Hoffman/Still Pictures, London

In good hands: indigenous guides in Venezuela accompany visitors along the Caura river, a tributary of the Orinoco.

members for taking certain species such as toucans and parrots (particularly coveted by tourists), or for exceeding quotas in the hunting zones.

Besides the need for a close relationship with a partner who has a sound knowledge of the travel market and a sensitivity toward indigenous communities, such projects need at least five years before they can become commercially viable. Training is the backbone of any succcessful enterprise. Even though these trips are no-frills experiences, some basic notions such as punctuality and hygiene in food preparation have to be understood by the community. Just as important, if a real exchange is to happen during the trip, guides have to know how to speak to visitors about their lifestyle and natural surroundings, and realize that they may have to slow down their pace when leading hikes along rainforest trails. All this requires dialogue and a community that is united around a respected leader. Although NGOs have also assisted communities in developing tourism projects, experience shows that they often lack contacts on the travel market to make these initiatives viable.

'Unlike oil, tourism is sustainable'

Other countries and continents are also boosting their presence on this niche market which is attracting more and more North American and European travellers. Take the case of Venezuela. Here, one indigenous group, the Pemons, does not flinch at accepting 100 tourists a day who fly in from a beach resort on Margarita Island to visit Salto Angel, the world's highest waterfall, in the southeast of the country. Besides accompanying visitors to the falls and serving them a meal, the Pemons have also built a village (an hour by road away from their own) of ten traditional cabins for overnight groups. Tourism revenue (the Pemons receive about $25 per day per visitor, the total package costing $70) has served to set up a school and a health dispensary and make up for declining state subsidies. Another group, the Ye'Kuanas, won rights from the government to manage land-use of a forest reserve. Part of it, beyond a natural barrier formed by a waterfall over the Caura river, is off limits to visitors, while in another, they have built guest cabins and developed itineraries for tourists in partnership with Natura Raid, an operator based in Caracas.

> The tourist is a child of the 20th century who only travels to comfort his prejudices.
>
> **Joaquín Luna, Spanish journalist**

As awareness of environmental issues has spread over the past decade, a growing number of travellers are looking into how the adventure/discovery-style trips they choose benefit communities. In response, the latter are joining forces in an effort to better promote their projects and design common standards. In Ecuador, the CONFENIAE, a confederation of indigenous groups from the Amazon basin, has published guidelines for managing ecotourism. The Ecuadorian Ecotourism Association has designed tools for evaluating the environmental policies of tour operators, which are now used in other Latin American countries. In Africa, Namibia formed a national association for community-based tourism (NACOBTA) in 1995 which groups 41 communities from a range of ethnic groups. It provides advice and training to communities seeking to start up projects, but also keeps a high profile in international travel fairs. Many experts see NACOBTA as one of the most rational ways for promoting and defending this tourism, which by nature, is small in scale and highly personalized.

The challenge today lies in designing national strategies that put the accent on training, access to markets and capital, and safety norms—issues that will be on the agenda of the Ecotourism Society's general assembly, to be held in December 1999 in Quito, upon the invitation of the Ecuadorian government. Clearly, this gesture is another sign that indigenous groups have gained a voice at national level, and tourism is just one way in which they are being heard. As one Ecuadorian ecotourism operator put it, "Unlike oil, tourism is sustainable." ■

- **Megan Epler-Wood, *Meeting the Global Challenge of Community Participation in Ecotourism: Case Studies and Lessons from Ecuador*, USAID, The Nature Conservancy, 1998**
- **Judy Karwacki, "Indigenous Ecotourism: Overcoming the Challenge", The Ecotourism Society Newsletter, first quarter 1999**
- **The Nacobta Community Based Tourism Association at nacobta@iafrica.com.na,**
- **Andy Drumm, *New Approaches to Community-based Ecotourism Management; Learning from Ecuador, Ecotourism, A Guide for Planners and Managers*, vol.2. The Ecotourism Society 1998.**
- **The Ecotourism Society (www.ecotourism.org) provides a wealth of resources and includes a virtual "ecotourism explorer path".**

Peru's 'meet the people' tours

Leticia Gonzáles de Remoué

The European Union and the Peruvian government are setting up a scheme for alternative tourism that benefits host communities

© Marco/Ask, Paris

The Maras salt pans near Machu Picchu, where tourists can take a quick course in salt extraction.

Peru, the cradle of ancient civilizations and the home of active indigenous communities, is attracting more and more tourists who want to get away from the old "See a country in seven days and nights" package and is putting more and more emphasis on its cultural and archaeological assets. Until recently, however, key elements like contact with local people have been neglected.

To put things right, the European Union and the Committee to Promote Peru (PromoPerú) launched a jointly funded 1m-euro programme in 1996 to develop the country's tangible and intangible cultural attractions "from within".

The scheme, whose joint director is a Belgian tourism consultant, Lieve Coppin, is known as the "Integrated Support Programme for the Development of Tourism in Peru". It grew out of a series of seminars involving public and private bodies, local associations and rural communities.

The job that had to be done was no sinecure. Factors such as terrorism and a cholera epidemic which broke out in 1990 and ravaged the country between 1991 and 1993 had reduced Peru's attractiveness as a tourist destination. Many service companies went bankrupt and the tourist industry suffered.

After nearly two years of fieldwork which took Coppin all over the country, six "development zones" were chosen—three in the south (Barrio de San Blas, Urubamba and Ollantaytambo) and three in the north (Olleros-Chavín, Túcume and Cajamarca). A hundred or so proposals were considered from these areas, of which 31 were accepted.

Writing guidebooks, designing posters and leaflets, making maps of the sites and creating Internet websites for communities where sometimes little Spanish was spoken were some of the most urgent tasks done by the scheme, which allotted between $20,000 and $40,000 to each project.

The result is tourist packages that strengthen cultural identity, respect the environment, actively involve local communities and make a profit. Among the tours on offer are "Posada Amazonas" ("Explore the Tambopata jungle with the Ese'eja people," as the brochure says), "Willoc, Living Inca Art and Culture" ("Learn with an Indian family about the art of weaving modern tapestry with ancient yarn") and "Peru Llama Trek" ("Villagers and their llamas will take you to the sources of Andean culture").

Tourism with cultural identity

Elsewhere, the attraction of prestigious archaeological sites like Machu Picchu has been used to develop tourism in nearby communities. For example, the salt pans at Maras ("Participatory Tourism in Urubamba"), draw very few of the many tourists who every day visit the spectacular ancient Inca city just over an hour away. The project aims to extend Machu Picchu's sphere of influence to Maras, where visitors can take part in activities like extracting the salt using methods handed down over the generations and will be guided around by the villagers themselves.

However, in trying to market these tours, the organizers have encountered a certain lack of enthusiasm on the part of tour operators who regard the projects as competition, albeit on a small scale. Another problem is lack of inspection of arrangements that might clash with international consumer protection laws. To overcome these obstacles, the flow of information must be improved between local tour operators, foreign travel agents and customers.

The next step is to get the authorities to treat tourism as a major economic activity. Only then will such projects become part of a medium and long-term plan through which Peru will be able to fulfil the main goal of the programme, to offer "tourism with cultural identity". ■

We find after years of struggle that we do not take a trip, a trip takes us.

John Steinbeck, American novelist (1902-1968)

Peruvian archaeologist

● South.American.Destination@wanadoo fr
● lcoppin@promperu.gob.pe

2 Safeguarding heritage

Will market forces rule?

Valéry Patin

Tourism can be a boon for a country's heritage as long as the law of the market is applied in moderation

Visiting archaeological sites, monuments and museums is often an ambivalent kind of tourism. On the one hand, it is seen as having an important educational and social function, helping tourists to find out more about the culture of the communities they visit. On the other, it is regarded as a major risk, especially for physically fragile sites (containing cave paintings, for example) which attract flocks of tourists, and sites where tourist facilities are few or inadequate.

So excessive exploitation of sites by tourism has been criticized on the grounds that it may rob host communities of their traditional cultural landmarks and destroy the authenticity and significance of their heritage. This happens when attempts are made, through superficial presentations or video games, to cater for visitors who want to be given a quick general picture of the site.

This conflict cannot be solved by cultural measures alone. The growing economic importance of archaeological sites, monuments and museums over the past 15 years as a result of tourist demand must be taken into account as well.

To cope with the pressure, many countries have made big efforts to improve and diversify the presentation of their cultural heritage. Museums have been refurbished. More than $1.1 billion was spent on doing up the Louvre in Paris. New sites have sprung up, including modern art museums in San Francisco, Barcelona, Rome, Tokyo, Hong Kong and Bilbao.

Historic city centres have been renovated, and famous monuments such as the Grassi Palace and the Ca Rezzonico in Venice have been restored. There has been a sharp rise in the number of big exhibitions. More than half a million visitors routinely visit blockbuster shows (e.g. Vermeer at The Hague, Monet in Chicago, and Cézanne and Georges de la Tour in Paris). The 1999 Monet exhibition in London broke the record for a temporary exhibition, clocking up more than 8,500 visitors a day.

These efforts to popularize culture have been widely supported by the media. For most visitors, heritage has become a familiar, easily accessible commodity providing surprises, relaxation and enjoyment. The substantial growth in short-stay cultural tourism reflects this. Such packages typically include a reserved ticket for one or more cultural events, such as an exhibition or an opera, train or air fare, and board—preferably in a charming hotel.

So tourism has been a driving force over the past 15 years in taking cultural heritage into the economic mainstream. This has brought changes in the way heritage is preserved and developed, including the role played by institutions and investment.

Pressures to create jobs and income

In most countries with big tourist industries, apart from the United States and Britain, cultural sites have long been run by public institutions, and the money earned from visitors is largely ploughed back into the sites. This funding is sometimes topped up by other private and public investment.

In some cases however, the income from these sites is used for other purposes than their preservation and development, as may be justified by the economic plight of some of the host countries. This means there is an incentive to over-exploit the cultural heritage while cutting back on the investment needed to preserve and present it properly. Worse, it can lead to the building of ▶

Sociologist, administrator of the international scientific committee on cultural tourism of ICOMOS (the International Council on Monuments and Sites)

► tourist facilities, especially hotels, whose poor location and mediocre design seriously harm the quality and authenticity of cultural landscapes.

Planned management of sites can usually avoid such mistakes, though sometimes pressure from economic interests means the plans are not carried out. This has happened with efforts to restore and preserve the sites at Angkor Wat, in Cambodia, and Petra, in Jordan (see article page 40).

The growth of tourism, especially the income it provides, has sometimes induced cultural institutions to develop and redirect some of their activities. In France, the National Museums service (RMN), which runs all state museums, was given commercial status in 1990, enabling it to collect entrance fees, publish art books and sell associated items. The RMN now has an annual turnover of $125 million and employs about 1,000 people.

In Britain, spinoff income (from heritage-related items, mail-order and restaurants) earned by the National Trust, a private body which manages more than 500 historic buildings and natural sites, tops $75 million. New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art earns close to $110 million. In many countries, governments encourage the private sector to provide funds to support cultural heritage or to set up foundations.

Most of the time, cultural institutions and tourist operators co-operate, via agreements to share staff training facilities and other forms of partnership. But clashes occur too. The Tunisian national tourist office recently claimed the right to administer directly all the country's monuments, museums and cultural sites, since most of the income from admission charges and the sale of associated items comes from tourists. The matter was only settled when the president of the republic stepped in and ruled that this was a job for the country's cultural institutions.

Private and public investment to protect cultural heritage (preservation and restoration) is generally declining while funds to enhance it are increasing

Private and public investment to protect cultural heritage (preservation and restoration) is generally declining while funds to enhance it are increasing.[1] Cultural sites are coming under growing economic pressure to generate jobs and income. These days, an economic feasibility study is often commissioned to back up proposals to fund the development of a site, monument or museum.

Furthermore, public funding for preservation and development now needs simply to be justified by the presence of a clear "economic" goal, mostly based on tourism-related arguments, as in the case of the European Union's Leader II, Interreg and Phare programmes, which received some $1.9 billion between 1994 and 1999. By comparison, over the same period, the Raphael programme—the European Union's only project specifically designed to safeguard and preserve cultural property—drew a mere $38 million.

Heritage supermarkets

Tourism can benefit cultural heritage as long as there is a cultural rationale independent of economic interests, even if it is to some extent adapted to these interests. This means having laws and regulations and guaranteed public funding. Cultural officials must also have a more realistic view of the obligations and benefits of the economics of tourism. This implies greater respect for the private sector's management skills, insofar as the private sector can adapt to the specific task of running monuments, sites and museums which have become "consumer goods".

If the law of the market is applied indiscriminately, it may lead to jazzed-up heritage supermarkets which have been standardized and adapted to meet consumer demand. And where the authentic heritage would be ill-adapted to this kind of presentation, there is nothing to rule out making a copy of it, not to protect the original (as in the case of prehistoric cave painting sites), but to increase profits.

This is the idea behind the new seaside resort at Yasmin Hammamet, in Tunisia, where a 55,000-square-metre artificial medina is being built. In it, there will be none of the access, traffic or management problems that exist these days in real-life medinas. ■

Pompeii is a most surprising sight: this sudden leap across 19 centuries astonishes even the most prosaic and least perceptive people.

Théophile Gautier, French writer (1811-1872)

A casino-hotel in Las Vegas (United States) recreates an Egyptian setting.

© Martin Parr/Magnum, Paris

1. This trend is difficult to quantify because financial data do not make it possible to clearly separate funding earmarked for preservation from funding for development.

Pompeii puts its house in order

Martine Jacot

Engulfed in volcanic ash 2,000 years ago, the ancient Roman city was slowly dying a second death. But help is on the way

© Marc Deville

Limiting the number of visitors entering a house at a given time (above, the villa of the Vettii) is one proposal currently being studied in Pompeii.

The Roman city of Pompeii, a stone's throw from Naples, was buried beneath volcanic ash when Vesuvius erupted in 79 AD. It was restored pretty much intact as a result of systematic excavations which began in 1748, but in recent years it has been facing a second, slower death at the hands of a host of largely unwitting culprits. The ruins attract a flood of visitors, whose numbers rose from 863,000 in 1981 to nearly two million in 1998. There are not enough attendants patrolling the site to prevent the murals, frescos, mosaics, sculptures and other fragile remains from being damaged (or even stolen). The site has been poorly administered, to put it mildly. The official previously in charge is currently under investigation for embezzlement.

On top of this, the ravages of time and the weather have been aggravated by the fact that the authorities have often opted to continue excavating instead of making sure that buildings already unearthed were properly preserved. Forty-nine of the site's 64 hectares have now been excavated, but whereas in 1956 visitors could see 64 houses or buildings in the ancient city, for the past few years they only been able to see 16 because the others have been cordoned off for protection.

Concern about the situation is widespread. "At this rate, in 10 years' time there won't be much to see at Pompeii," said Andrea Carandini, one of Italy's most eminent archaeologists, in 1995. A year later, the U.S.-based World Monuments Fund (WMF) classified Pompeii as one of the world's most endangered sites. In 1998, the city was put on UNESCO's World Heritage List.

'At this rate, in 10 years' time there won't be much to see at Pompeii'

Three years ago, a page was turned when a respected expert, Pietro Giovanni Guzzo, was appointed superintendent of Pompeii. The following year, the Italian parliament gave the site administration broad financial independence. Until then, visitors' entry fees went directly to the government, which allotted varying amounts of money to the country's archaeological and historic sites.

"Since my appointment, I've concentrated on setting up an independent administration and above all on trying to prevent damage to the archaeological monuments," says Guzzo, who has introduced a "theme walk" with arrows to direct visitors around the huge site. He has a budget of $11 million, three-quarters of which comes from the sale of tickets and items associated with the site. However, studies have shown that "saving" Pompeii will cost about $310 million.

Help has been promised or is under way from museums and universities in Italy and abroad, as well as the WMF, which decided last year to provide $600,000 over three years, mainly to fund a general assessment of the state of the site and the drafting of detailed criteria for restoration work.

To further boost Pompeii's resources, a law passed by the Italian parliament in 1997 said "private firms who want to take part in the restoration can obtain tax breaks under certain circumstances." Wild rumours have spread recently about the supposedly "imminent" conversion of the site into a "theme park" with guides dressed in Roman togas, but Guzzo has categorically denied there are any such plans. ■

Unesco Courier journalist

Learning holidays:

Garry Marchant

People wanting to spend their vacations in pursuit of culture have a fairly wide choice of options that go beyond mere sightseeing. Numerous companies organize tours for lovers of architecture or art. Those who don't mind roughing it can do volunteer project work, join archaeological digs or help with cultural studies.

Though not an endorsement of any tour organization or programme, the following sample includes just a few of the many options available.

ART AND ARCHITECTURE

● Instituto per l'Arte e il Restauro Palazzo Spinelli offers throughout the summer two- to four-week courses on Italian art including fresco, painting, ceramics, stone, archaeological, paper, glass, carpet, textile and wood restoration; study of the antique trade; drawing and painting; graphic design; computer graphics; interior design; garden design and planning; and Italian language. **Website www.spinelli.it; phone (39) 55 246001; fax (39) 55 240709; or write Borgo S. Croce, 10 - 50122 Florence, Italy.**

● The Instituto Allende in San Miguel de Allende, Mexico, has short-term courses in painting, silver work, drawing, lithography and etching, silk screening, ceramics, multi-media sculpture, traditional Mexican weaving, Mexican art history, Spanish language classes and iron sculpture. **E-mail iallende@instituto-allende.edu.com, phone (52) 415 2-01-90, fax (52) 415 2-45-38 or write Ancha de San Antonio #20, San Miguel Allende, Guanajuato, Mexico.**

● Wisconsin, USA-based Adventures in Perspective brings together Mayan, Mexican and American artists to teach painting, ceramics, batik making, drumming, cooking and story-telling from their respective cultures. Week-long courses take place at the Sian Ka'an Biosphere Reserve, on Mexico's Yucatan Peninsula. **E-mail advenper@win.bright.net; phone (1) 715 779-9503; or write P.O. Box 874, Bayfield, Wisconsin, 54814, USA.**

● Sua Bali offers two-week and longer courses in batik painting, local music, cookery, herbal medicine and the Indonesian language. Classes take place at a mini-resort of seven traditional guest houses in a rural setting south of the village of Ubud, renowned for its painting. **E-mail suabali@indosat.net.id, phone (62) 361 941-050, fax (62) 361 941-035 or write Mrs. Ida Ayu Mas, PO Box 155, Gianyar 80500, Bali, Indonesia**

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE WORK

● There are numerous opportunities to take part in archaeological digs. For example, every spring, *Current Archaeology* magazine publishes the Directory of British Archaeology, listing more than 700 societies, universities and professional units. A small number of these open their archaeological fieldwork to outsiders on weekends, or for several weeks in the summer. **Website www.currentarchaeology.com; phone (44) (0)171 435-7517; fax (44) (0)171 916-2405; or write to *Current Archaeology*, 9 Nassington Road, London NW3 2T, UK.**

● Aberdeen University Centre for Continuing Education runs a "field school" in archaeology at three sites in Scotland during July and August. **E-mail cce-aberdeen@abdn.ac.uk, phone (44) (0)1463 718718; fax (44) (0)1463 714794; or write to B5 Etive House, Beechwood Park, Inverness, Scotland, IV2 3BW.**

● In Antigua, West Indies, Betty's Hope, a 350-year-old sugar plantation, is undergoing a multi-year restoration programme. Volunteers take part in archaeological excavations and archival research, and learn surveying and excavation techniques, processing and cataloguing of artefacts, conservation methods, archival record research and report preparation. **Website www.interimpact.com/expedition, phone (1) 819 682-0562; fax (1) 819 682-8001; or write to Cultural Expeditions MEC Canada Inc. Westgate PO 35012, Ottawa, Que. K1Z 1A2, Canada.**

● In Ecuador, weekend archaeologists unearth artefacts from pre-Hispanic chiefdoms in the Guayllabamba valley. They learn labeling and washing artefacts in the lab. **E-mail jvogel@earthwatch.org. (See below Earthwatch entry in Further Information).**

● Amateur archaeologists learn about one of the original North American civilizations, the Hopis, in Arizona. Crews of four (with a graduate student supervisor) photograph and map artefacts, draw stratigraphy, excavate and wash, sort and catalogue artefacts. **E-mail smonty@earthwatch.org. (See Earthwatch in Further Information).**

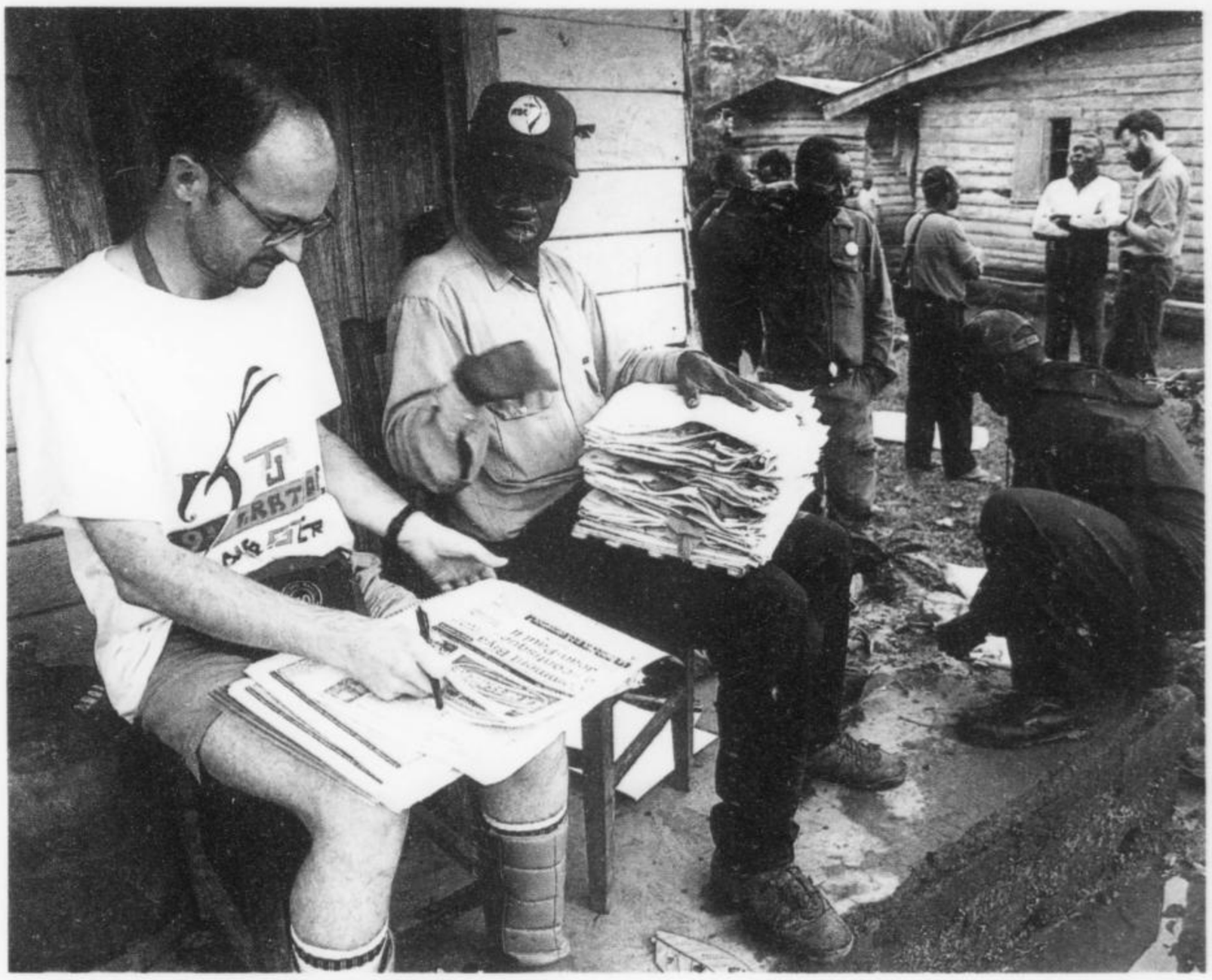
CULTURE

● Educational programmes relating to a specific culture can often be found through a country's official tourism board. **(www.towd.com has the address of every tourist board in the world, along with all of their branches.)**

LANGUAGE

● A language stay of two or three weeks arranged through Eurocentres combines a summer holiday with serious language learning, for adults, ages 16 and over. Students stay with a host family and participate in sports, culture and other entertainment. They can learn Japanese in Kanazawa, on Honshu, Japan's main island, French in Paris, Amboise, La Rochelle and Lausanne, Russian at the Moscow Linguistic University and Italian in the Scuola Leonardo da Vinci, Siena. English schools in North America are in Washington, DC; New York; East Lansing, Michigan; San Diego, California; Toronto, Ontario; and Vancouver, British Columbia. **Website www.eurocentres.com; phone (41) 1-485-5040; fax (41)1-481-6124; or write Foundation for European Language and Educational Centres, Seestrasse 247, CH-8038 Zurich, Switzerland**

a thumbnail guide



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A botany lesson in the rainforest of Mount Cameroon.

LIVING IN

● Asian Overland Services operates a five-day tropical adventure tour in various parts of Malaysia. Students live with local tribes to learn how indigenous people hunt, trap, fish and gather edible plants and medicinal herbs. Aborigines give practical lessons on how to build shelters and make traps. **Email aos@aostt.po, phone (60) 03-4529100/4519840; fax: (60) 03-4529800/4514001; or write Lot 39/40c, Jln Memanda 9, Ampang Point, 68000 Ampang, Selangor, Malaysia.**

● Wind, Sand & Stars, a British tour company, runs eight-day camel treks through the Sinai desert in which tourists travel and live with local Bedouin. Also eight-day Biblical tours. **E-mail: office@windsandstars.co.uk; phone (44) (0)171 433-3684; fax (44) (0)171 431-3247; or write Janina Macdonald, 2 Arkwright Road, London NW3 6AD, UK.**

MUSIC

● Amateur musicologists can help document Irish musical communities, video-taping and photographing music performances and interviewing audiences about their attitudes toward Irish traditional and Celtic music. Volunteers document festivals as well as private and pub sessions. Accommodation is in bed and breakfasts, university dorm rooms, and vacation cottages. **Email jvogel@earthwatch.org. (See Earthwatch in Further Information).**

● A Sound of Northern Moments music tour of Finland, Denmark, Norway and Sweden includes classic, choir, opera or jazz programmes. The Shaman's Drum folklore tour of Finland and Sweden focuses on cultural life, folk music festivals, domestic and international music, dance and theatre, both classical and modern. **E-mail ssinml@planet.net; phone (1) 973 729-8961; fax (1) 973 729-6565; or write Scandinavian Special Interest Network, P.O. Box 313, Sparta, New Jersey 07871-0313, USA.**

FURTHER INFORMATION

● US-based Earthwatch Institute funds scientific research by charging members of the public, aged 16 to 85, to help on some 130 projects worldwide. Many projects are based on cultural themes, including, for example, documenting Africa's musical traditions and excavating Mayan ruins. Teams are small and no previous research skills are required. Participants pay their air fare to the site, room and board and a fee to join the project. **Website www.earthwatch.org; phone, (1) 617 926-8200; fax (1) 617 926-8532; or write 680 Mount Auburn St., P.O. Box 9104, Watertown, MA 02471 USA; also, offices in Oxford, UK, Tokyo, Japan and Ottawa, Canada.**

● The Specialty Travel Guide lists tour operators around the world offering a variety of commercial special interest tours and courses—although these can be expensive. **Website www.infohub.com, phone (1) 510 505-0931; fax (1) 510 505-0732; or write to InfoHub Inc., 38764 Buckboard Common, Fremont, California 94536, USA.**

● The Educated Traveler newsletter also provides information on specialty travel. **Email edtrav@aol.com; www.educated-traveler.com; (1) 800 648-5168 or (1) 703 471-1063; fax 1 (703) 471-4807; or write P.O. Box 220822, Chantilly, Va. 20153, USA.**

● Tourism Concern, a London, UK-based NGO which campaigns for responsible tourism, lists travel agents around the world offering home stays and opportunities for "real human exchange". **Website www.gn.apc.org/tourismconcern; phone (44) (0) 171 753-3330; fax (44) (0) 171 753-3331; or write Stapleton House, 277-281 Holloway Road, London N78HN.** ■

Petra's new invaders

Christophe Ayad

Petra was declared a world heritage site in 1985, Since then it's been an uphill battle to protect Jordan's glorious ancient city hewn from pink rock

"Petra has changed more in the last 15 years than it did in the previous 14 centuries," says Ahmed Salamin, who knows what he is talking about. He was born in Wadi Moussa, the nearest town to the outstanding Jordanian site, and served as its mayor before becoming assistant director-general of the Petra Regional Planning Council (PRPC). Fourteen centuries ago, he says, a series of earthquakes seriously damaged the ancient city, once the capital of the kingdom of the Nabataeans, an Arab people who controled the caravan trade routes between Arabia and the Mediterranean before they were conquered by Rome in 106 A.D.

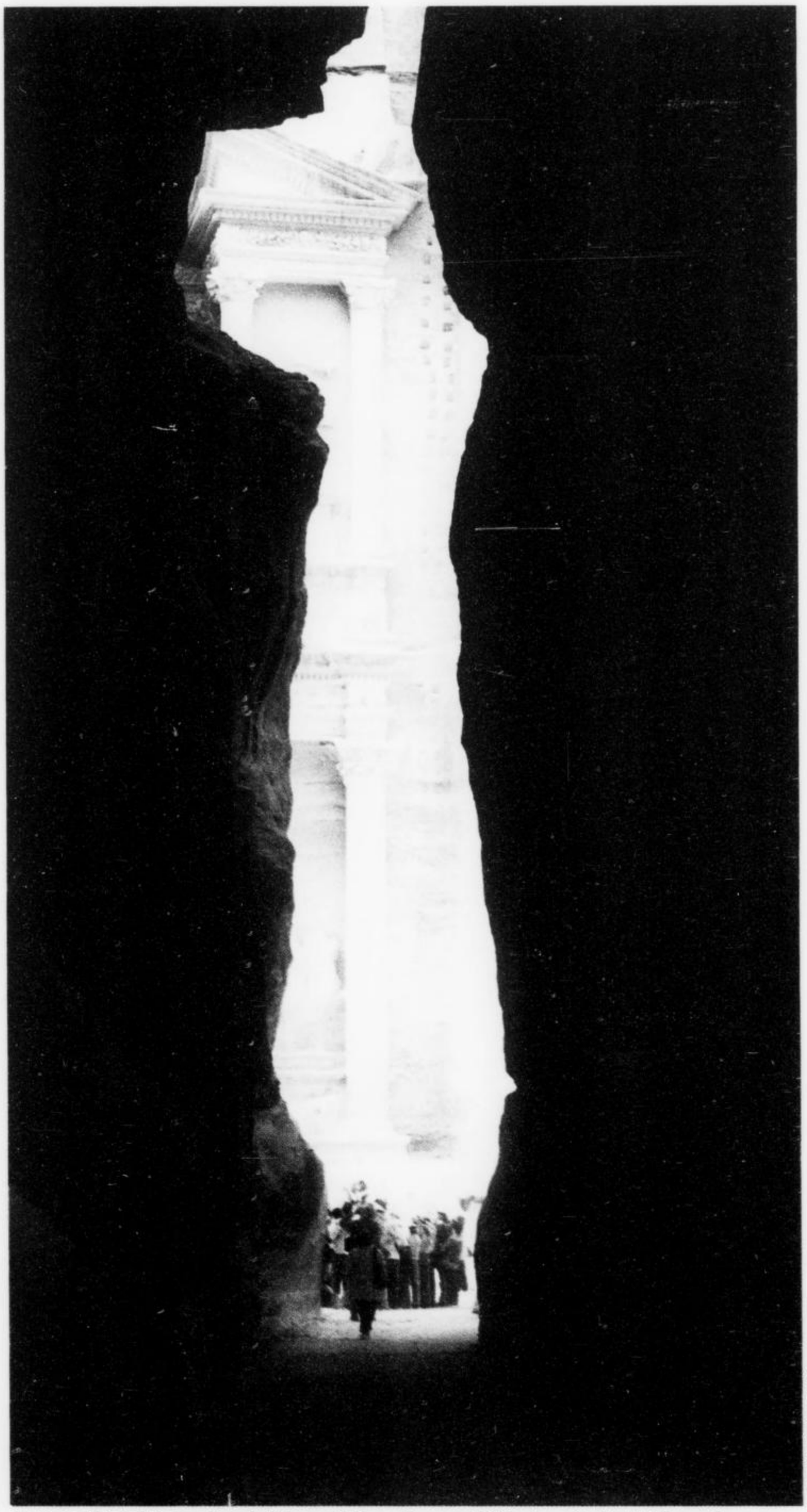
Today, Petra and those who seek to preserve the site have nothing to fear from the forces of nature or the Roman Empire. The present danger comes from the legions of tourists overrunning the site, whose 800 monuments carved into pink stone were included on UNESCO's World Heritage List in 1985. The number of visitors rose from 100,000 in the late 1980s to 400,000 six years later, then declined slightly. Recent regional tensions stemming from the crisis with Iraq and the deadlock in the peace process have deterred visitors, especially Israelis and Americans, from visiting some Middle Eastern countries.

A comprehensive plan

Concerned about the influx of tourists and the chaotic growth of Wadi Moussa, Queen Noor of Jordan sounded the alarm in the early 1990s. She appealed to UNESCO, which sent a mission of experts to Petra in 1992. The outcome was the Management Plan for the Petra National Park, which includes an array of measures covering the conservation and restoration of monuments, site development, the improvement of infrastructures, charting a future for the area's 25,000 inhabitants, and protection of the environment.

In accordance with the plan's recommendations, the Jordanian authorities set up the PRPC in 1995 to bring together all the official bodies concerned. Chaired by the minister of tourism, the council includes representatives of the department of antiquities, the ministries of planning, finance, labour, health, local government, and irrigation, the environmental protection department and local communities. Financed by a 25 per cent cut of the

Cairo-based journalist, special correspondent in Petra



© Claude Barthe/Sunset, Paris

A group of tourists are dwarfed beneath the columns of Petra's majestic Al-Khaznah monument, reached through a narrow gorge called the Siq.

© Harry Gruyaert/Magnum, Paris

Bdul, bedouins who once lived in Petra, now await tourists at the entrance to the site.

site's receipts, the council is empowered to review and approve all decisions concerning Petra. But several questions remain unanswered. Does it have enough political clout to control all the changes in its 900-square-kilometre area of competence? How can conservation needs and tourism interests be balanced in a country where tourism accounts for earnings of nearly one billion dollars a year and 17,500 jobs?

So far, tourism does not seem to have inflicted irreparable damage on Petra, and the prospect of increased revenues has led to some indispensable improvements. Under a $27-million priority action plan set up with the help of the World Bank in 1996, construction work has begun on a drainage system. Previously, untreated waste and waste water were often discharged into the environment. In addition, terraces dating back to the Nabataean period have been gradually restored and wadi beds cleaned. Once the hydraulic work is completed, the authorities will renovate the road network, especially in the centre of Wadi Moussa, which is congested with buses and taxis. Olive and pine trees are being planted to stop desertification. Reforestation "will help absorb water in the event of torrential rainfall and beautify the site," says Zeidoun al-Muheisen, director-general of the PRPC. "And it's the best way to prevent unauthorized building."

That threat, among others, is associated with the activities of the Bduls, Bedouin who lived in the ruins of Petra until 1985. They farmed in the area and had their goats graze there before being expelled and rehoused in the village of Oum Seyhoun on the edge of the archaeological park. Now most of them make a living from tourism, renting horses or selling trinkets. But the tribe's population has continued to grow and the Bduls, who believe they have been mistreated, are cramped in their new village. "There were 40 Bdul families in 1985. Today there are 350," says Salamin. "The tourist boom has drawn newcomers from the Aqaba region. If they want to move here all they have to do is buy land."

If they can afford it. Land prices have skyrocketed. That is why, say the Bduls, they are forced to add storeys to their houses, which are now visible from the site, where their flocks still graze. They can also expand Oum Seyhoun, but only on its northern side. The east is set aside for reforestation, the south is occupied by the archaeological site and the west is part of the natural park that is currently being created. This strictly regulated area will probably cover 264 square kilometres, forming a huge buffer zone around Petra. The U.S. National Parks Service will train a team to manage the area. But the project is still on the drawing board.

The hotels that have sprung up like mushrooms in Wadi Moussa have also caused degradation to the site. Ten years ago there were fewer than five; today there are around sixty. "The PRPC did not exist when most of the building permits were issued," says Salamin. "From now on we are making sure that nothing which can have a negative impact on Petra will be built." He is probably thinking of the unsightly Mövenpick restaurant, located a few metres from the entrance to the archaeological park, and the six hotels overlooking the site from the village of Taybé. The private sector is not the only culprit. Two large public buildings stand at the left of the entrance to Petra. One is the Wadi Moussa sports hall. The other is the future headquarters of the PRPC.

'From now on we are making sure that nothing which can have a negative impact on Petra will be built'

The admission fee at Petra is 20 dinars ($30), an exorbitant price that does not seem justified and makes the Nabataean city one of the world's most expensive sites. Of course, some difficulties are hard to avoid: to reach the heart of Petra, visitors must take the Siq, a narrow, 800-metre-long gorge carved into the rock that leads to the impressive Al Khaznah, a monument with a columned façade cut into the solid rock. Congestion seems inevitable. To limit it, horses are not allowed through the gorge unless they are drawing carriages.

Other improvements have made life easier for visitors. Toilets have been built, the site is kept meticulously clean, and souvenir vendors have been grouped together and will eventually be moved outside the park. On the other hand, the tourist information centre is too small and is used almost exclusively to display the handicrafts made by local women under the aegis of the Noor al-Hussein Foundation. Signposting is minimal: there are few maps and no explanations.

Under pressure from tourism and in the absence of a local tradition of site restoration, conservation may be the most pressing issue. In 1993 ▶

When one travels, one accepts everything, one leaves indignation at home. One looks, listens and becomes enthusiastic about the most appalling things just because they are new. Good travellers are inhuman.

Elias Canetti, Bulgarian writer (1905-1994)

► the German international co-operation agency, the GTZ, launched an ambitious programme in co-operation with Jordan's department of antiquities. The first on-site training centre is scheduled for completion by the end of 1999. After years of work, the centre developed a natural mortar which is particularly suitable for the stone at Petra. This discovery seems especially important since the cement and reinforced concrete used in earlier restoration work have caused damage to the Khaznah and other monuments. These "modern" materials trap water in the monumental stonework, which is gradually eaten away from within and cracks in some places.

Restoration is a long job, but tour operators are in a hurry and the scales are tipping in their favour. Conservationists are having trouble making their voices heard. The department of antiquities reports to the ministry of tourism, which does not like to see scaffolding up for a long time. In an effort to stop water seepage into some of the monuments, the authorities have applied sprays that prevent the stone from breathing and may cause the same problems as cement.

Controversial initiatives

That's not all, say archaeologists, who are particularly critical of the activities of the Petra National Trust, a private foundation whose members are prominent figures who want to contribute to the enhancement of Jordan's foremost cultural treasure. Chaired by Prince Raad ben Zeid, a cousin of the late King Hussein, the Trust has commissioned a Swiss company to build a series of dams in the small valleys that give on to the Siq. The purpose is to avoid a recurrence of the tragedy that occurred in 1963, when 21 French tourists drowned as a result of flash floods. The $1.5-million project, which is financed by the Swiss government, damages the site's integrity, say archaeologists, who would like to restore the Nabataean hydraulic system. Experts are also upset about the way the same company excavated the ancient pavement "with a bulldozer and without archaeological supervision." To cap it all, the Swiss firm coated the Siq's unpaved surfaces with a white, powdery substance that has spread to the walls of the gorge, masking the rock's magnificent colours.

"We're not here just to restore four monuments, carry out a high-profile operation and leave," says Helge Fischer, head of the GTZ project. "Our objective is to set up a Jordanian structure capable of looking after the restoration of monuments." This body, the Conservation and Restoration Centre in Petra (CARCIP), will be independent of the department of antiquities and staffed by highly-qualified professionals. So far, GTZ has spent $3.5 million on equipment and training six specialized workers, two architects and two stone-cutters. In the long term, the team should comprise ten or more people. But CARCIP has not yet got off the ground. ■

The sadness of Venice does not arouse melancholy; it is an oppression that overwhelms the heart; the humid atmosphere weighs upon the lungs, and the traveller at every instant wishes to flee and breathe elsewhere.

Domingo F. Sarmiento, Argentinian writer and politician (1811-1888)

Venice: coping with culture vultures

◗ Antonio Paolo Russo

Inundated with visitors, Venice is now trying to scare some of them off. But there are better ways of rescuing the city from tourism

Beauty bears its burdens, and in tourism no place illustrates this more clearly than Venice. So popular a destination has it become that tourism has created a crisis of economic, social, demographic, but perhaps above all, cultural proportions. However, it need not be so.

For years now, Venice has in many ways failed to live up to its romantic image. The centre is so crowded one can hardly move, shops offer low quality at high prices, and street vendors add an extra decimal place to the price for a Korean tourist searching for a made-in-Korea carnival mask.

Things are not much better for the local population. As services from schools to hospitals are forced out of the city to make way for more cost-efficient operations like fast food restaurants and souvenir shops, Venice is less and less able to hold on to its citizens. The city's population has now sunk to about 68,000, only slightly more than a third of what it was in 1951. This is understandable when one considers the disadvantages of living in Venice. Restaurant meals are very expensive. The purchase of a necessity like spectacles can involve an hour's journey to neighbouring towns. If one happens to crave French cheese, the excursion could stretch to two hours.

◗ Researcher in town planning at Erasmus University, Rotterdam (Netherlands) and a specialist on Venice

Venice is thus a very good case of unsustainable tourism. What's under threat in Venice, which 250 years ago was one of the most powerful and most populated cities in Europe, is culture in the broadest sense. Yes, the issue is heritage preservation. But in addition, both citizens and visitors presumably want the city to remain a living entity, and not be transformed into an empty stage, where the sterile representation of an act of consumption—tourism—is performed

One approach is to scare off some of the tourists, namely, the day-trippers who, numbering some seven million per year, pass a few hours in the city, contribute to congestion at the main tourist attractions, add to transportation, sanitation and other problems and spend only a minimal amount of money in the city. To this end, Venice recently hired Oliviero Toscani, the photographer behind Italian clothes-maker Benetton's controversial advertisements, to produce a negative publicity campaign featuring images of garbage and dead pigeons.

© MartinParr/Magnum, Paris

Rain or shine, Venice is a crowd-puller, but the city is trying to cut down on day-trippers.

Smart cards to attract high spenders

Hopefully, by reducing the number of day-trippers, the city will not only cut down on associated costs, but also hold greater allure for tourists prepared to stay a few days—and thus put real money into the local economy. However, rather than shooing tourists away, a more durable solution is to improve the supply side of the tourism industry equation by creating a cultural tourism system.

This approach is based on the recognition that Venice's cultural offering is so vast that it can satisfy the demands of a public with quite different preferences. However, greater efforts need to be made to publicize this offering. Perhaps the most expedient method is to set up an information technology infrastructure allowing visitors to access details about city sites as well as events, and to make advance bookings.

This strategy could include the issuance of a multi-service "Venice Card" offering tourists opportunities not available to those who do not book: for example, the right to jump queues; discounts on museum entry and transport fares, at restaurants and in shops; and information about special events. The card could be delivered, at no charge, to the overnight-stay tourists when they book a hotel.

In this way, serious cultural tourists get a better deal because they can more easily discover what is on offer, and then arrange their itineraries expediently and benefit from discounts. Meanwhile, the city is better off because it attracts relatively high-spending tourists who add to its profits from tourism.

Diversifying the economy

Information systems such as these will be given a test run during the Jubilee 2000 celebrations, when Italy expects an enormous inflow of tourists. The ALATA partnership of northeastern Italian cities will use an information system designed to manage and distribute visitor flow by telling pilgrims how heavily booked cities are. If a city's hotels are full, the system will redirect tourists to other localities for accommodation. This is an emergency measure aimed at coping with celebrations rather than providing incentives for certain types of cultural tourism. But it is a first attempt to use modern telecommunications technology to full advantage.

At the moment, within the Venice city administration, the idea of "soft controls" seems to be gaining support. Pilot projects are underway for the creation of a network connecting cultural institutions. Much more needs to be done.

But Venice needs not only to manage its tourism better, but also to diversify its economy. In a review of sustainable development options for Venice, scholars Enzo Rullani and Stefano Micelli suggest that Venice could become the capital of a metropolitan area specializing in producer services, from data processing to software design and finance; cultural industries such as musical and theatrical productions; and other activities from research to providing convention services. This requires a system of fast transport to reconnect Venice, an island that is relatively difficult to get to and from, to the rest of the region.

Another vision is that of Venice as the capital of hi-tech and data processing, overcoming its physical isolation through electronic accessibility. Whatever approach is used, it is now recognized that if the culture of Venice is to remain a living entity the city needs to be refashioned into a place that exists for more than tourism. ■

Luang Prabang
a ghost town returns to life

Francis Engelmann

The former royal capital of Laos is turning back to its traditional culture and its architectural heritage

To those who ask me why I travel, I usually say that I know what I am escaping from, but not what I am looking for.

Michel de Montaigne, French writer (1533-1592)

Luang Ouane Phothiphanya is tired but happy. In the main room of Wat Xieng Thong, one of the most splendid pagodas in Luang Prabang, the former Laotian royal capital, he has just finished his daily rehearsal of traditional puppet theatre with a group of young pupils. Now 75 years old, he is the only remaining practitioner of this art.

"There used to be 12 of us in this neighbourhood, but now I'm the only one left. Rehearsals started a couple of months ago, with help from the ministry of culture, and I think the puppets will be saved," he says as he puts away the two sticks he used to mark time during the show. Nearby, the local children and a handful of tourists are still under the spell of the music and gentle movements of these little puppet characters, who range from benevolent princes to village jesters and fearsome demons.

At the other end of the city, near the Talat Dara market, children go in the evenings after school and all day on Saturdays to the Young People's Cultural Centre, where their activities include music, traditional drawing, weaving, and reading stories. "We've still got a lot to do to maintain the intangible parts of our cultural heritage like dancing, music, poetry and puppetry, and develop and pass them on to the children," says Khamphouy Phommavong, the local representative of the ministry of culture. "Traditional music is still alive and dance is starting up again. Tourism is helping this to happen."

A cautious opening

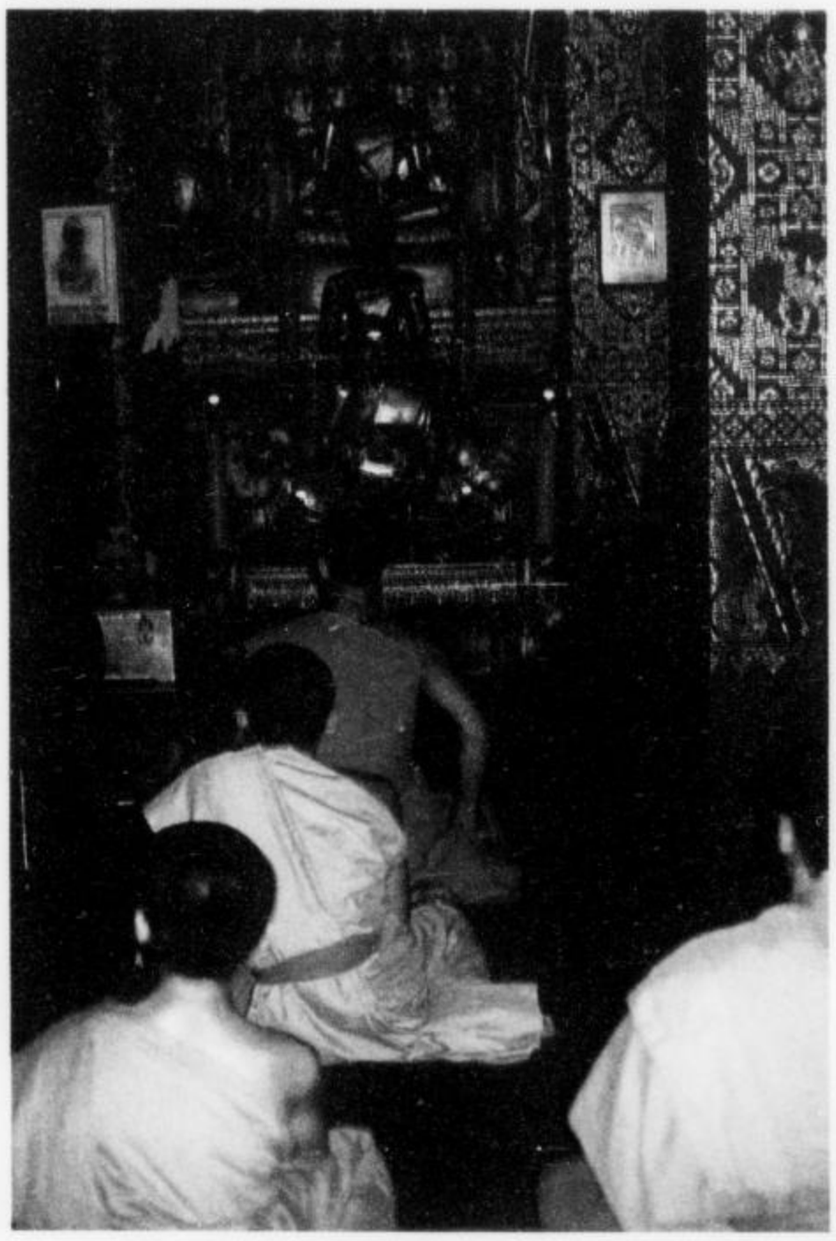
Luang Prabang has taken on a new lease of life. The former capital of northern Laos, on the banks of the upper Mekong river, it was harshly treated by the rulers who took power in the 1975 revolution, abolished the monarchy and set up the People's Democratic Republic of Laos.

Some of the city's inhabitants were sent to re-education camps. The city withdrew into itself, many houses became derelict, the shops on the main street closed down, the pagodas were deserted and traditions faded out. Few tourists ventured into what was almost a ghost town. Things slowly began to change in the 1990s, as the government—which had sought to introduce "a new way of thinking" and then "new economic methods"—became more flexible and the country opened up economically.

And now the city, which today has 60,000 inhabitants, has come back to life. Since 1995, many small businesses and restaurants have opened. And tourists have returned to Luang Prabang, increasing from 19,000 in 1996 to 44,000 in 1998, according to official figures. The city now has 45 hotels, compared with only six in 1993.

The authorities have always been cautious, fearing that a too sudden upsurge in tourism would bring with it drugs, prostitution and damage to the environment. Nevertheless, entry into Laos has been made easier. Visitors no longer have to go through government-approved travel agencies or get special permission to drive around the country. Since 1997, entry visas have been issued on arrival. Also, the decision to declare 1999 and 2000 as "years of tourism" perhaps indicates a change of heart by the government, or

Evening prayers for young monks at Wat Xieng pagoda, built in the 16th century.



© Monique Pietri, Paris

The author of *Luang Prabang* (ASA publishers, Paris, 1997), and a member of the UNESCO missions that prepared the listing of Luang Prabang as a World Heritage site.

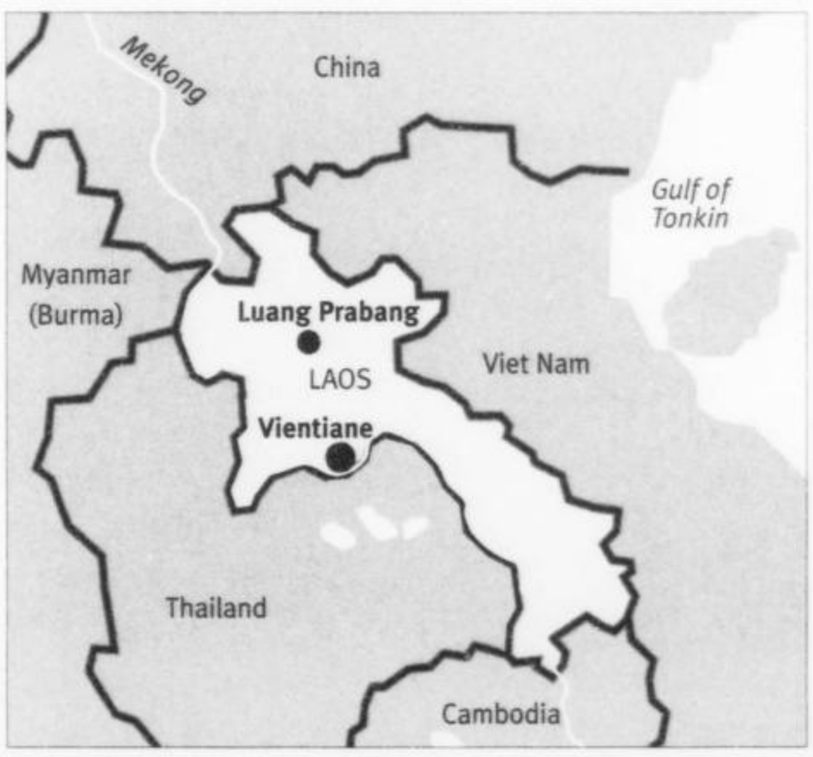
© Monique Pietri, Paris

One of Luang Prabang's many colourful festivals: a procession starring a wild boar, the symbolic animal of 1998, celebrates the Laotian New Year.

at least some people in it. At any rate, official figures show that last year tourism became the country's main source of income.

The traditional way of life in Luang Prabang is one of its charms for the alert stroller. Noisy motor-boats on the Mekong have been banned and have to keep their distance from the city. The religious life of the monasteries, goldsmiths at work, women weaving among the stilts supporting the houses and old ladies taking offerings to pagodas are scenes that captivate tourists.

Visitors are more numerous when the city's famed religious or ethnic festivals are going on. The main event, the Laotian New Year in mid-April, features parades, dances and the procession of the Buddha Phra Bang, the city's spiritual guardian. As well as these festivities, which have recovered their former spirit, there are a variety of family celebrations, which passing visitors are often generously invited to join in.



This cultural renaissance goes side by side with the longer-term job of preserving the city's architectural standards, which has been a matter of concern for the last decade. "In 1990, all we planned was the partial restoration of the old royal palace and the city's finest pagodas," says Thongsa Sayavongkhamdy, director of museums and archaeology in the national capital, Vientiane. "Gradually we realized that the beauty of Luang Prabang was something to be seen as a whole—not just the religious buildings but also the houses around them, and then nature itself, the jewel of it all."

A protected zone has been marked out in the old part of the city and a preservation and development plan is almost ready. Plans for improving sewage treatment are on the drawing board. A broader urban development plan will enable decisions to be made about future extensions of the city and the startup of businesses near the new stadium, just below the old town.

Since Luang Prabang was put on UNESCO's World Heritage List in 1995—600 of its buildings are classified—many houses have been restored along traditional lines. Koutis—monks' dwellings typical of the city's architecture—have been ▶

© Frédérik Froument, Paris

Luang Prabang is famed for its traditional houses with wood façades.

▶ restored or rebuilt in their original form. The finest pagodas have also been refurbished. Most of the saffron-robed novices who can be seen in and around them are children of needy families who receive secondary education in the pagodas thanks to money donated by the faithful.

The House of Heritage has played a key role in the successful restoration of Luang Prabang's architectural heritage. It brings together several government ministries and attracts sizeable funding from abroad. "The streets and the quaysides of the Mekong and its tributary were restored first," says Laurent Rampon, a Frenchman who is one of the three foreign experts working permanently at the House of Heritage, of which he is the main architect. "We now want to clean and brighten up the alleyways which lead to important buildings such as the house of Lung Khamlek." This big edifice perched on stilts is one of the rare examples of Luang Prabang's pre-colonial aristocratic architecture. Some outstanding woodwork was crafted during its restoration, which was recently completed.

Tight regulations for building and restoration

The people of Luang Prabang come to the House of Heritage for help and advice on building, repairing and extending houses in the protected zone. No building work can be done without permission from the House, which makes sure that projects harmonize with the style of the old town. But the restrictions imposed by the new regulations and concern for the general good are not always accepted without complaint. Some people are benefiting from tourism, but others see the city's listing as a World Heritage site as interference in their right to alter their houses as they please or, for example, to fill in a pond at the bottom of their garden.

Even the bonzes sometimes object to the new rules. "Why do I have to ask someone who usually goes down on his knees before me what colour tiles I'm allowed to use to mend the roof of my pagoda?" asks one venerable monk who dislikes not being absolute master in his monastery. A scheme to help the bonzes will soon be under way with Norwegian funding. In co-operation with the Buddhist clergy it will seek to preserve the authenticity of the religious heritage and revive certain skills traditionally practised by the bonzes such as stencil painting, enamelling, giltwork and religious sculpture.

"We want to rely on the people and see that they benefit from protection of the heritage," says Chansy Phosikham, Luang Prabang's governor. "We also have to think about the social and economic development of the whole city." A small tax on tourism activities has been proposed. Rampon supports it because "it will enable us to subsidize the use of traditional building materials, which are currently too expensive for many small house-owners and also sometimes not very good quality." It remains to be seen whether people will accept such a tax.

Despite the problems, a lot has been achieved in Luang Prabang. Some of it is due to well-planned foreign help, especially from the European Union, UNESCO and the French government. "Now-forgotten building materials such as whitewash and traditional plasterwork have been analysed in laboratories abroad," says Phommavong. "We've also been helped by experts who have worked with us for long periods and who we've gradually learned from. And we couldn't have done it all without the tireless help of Yves Dauge."

'We want to rely on the people and see that they benefit from protection of the heritage'

Dauge, the mayor of Chinon in central France, and a member of the French parliament, has set up "decentralized co-operation" between the administration of the two cities (something new for Laos) and has lobbied for Luang Prabang at international level. He says the Laotians were suspicious at first, but then came to trust him, as they have retained control of the operations throughout.

Laotian culture ministry officials reckon that what has happened in Luang Prabang has significantly changed the way people think. It has led to "the drafting of regulations and especially a new attitude by the authorities to the question of heritage," says Sayavongkhamdy. "Officials come from elsewhere in Laos to see what's being done in Luang Prabang and to get ideas from it."

But "the most wonderful thing" about Luang Prabang is "the kindness and generosity of its inhabitants," says Santi Inthavong, who has restored a former royal residence and turned it into a hotel. "This heritage is so fragile that I wonder whether it will survive the growth of tourism." ■

Only through travel can people mature.

Persian proverb

A slow rescue for Morocco's earthen citadels

Mohamed Berriane

Reviving southern Morocco's ancient fortified villages is no easy task

Will tourism save the ksars and kasbahs of the valleys and oases of southern Morocco? Perched on rocky crags, these fortified buildings made of compacted earth mixed with water and chopped straw are a draw for foreign tourists in search of unusual architectural sites. One jumping-off point to see them is Ouarzazate in the Atlas Mountains, 200 kilometres south of Marrakesh. This remote and ancient little town has become a busy tourist centre. With a total 5,502 beds in its officially-approved hotels, it attracts more than 450,000 overnight visits every year.

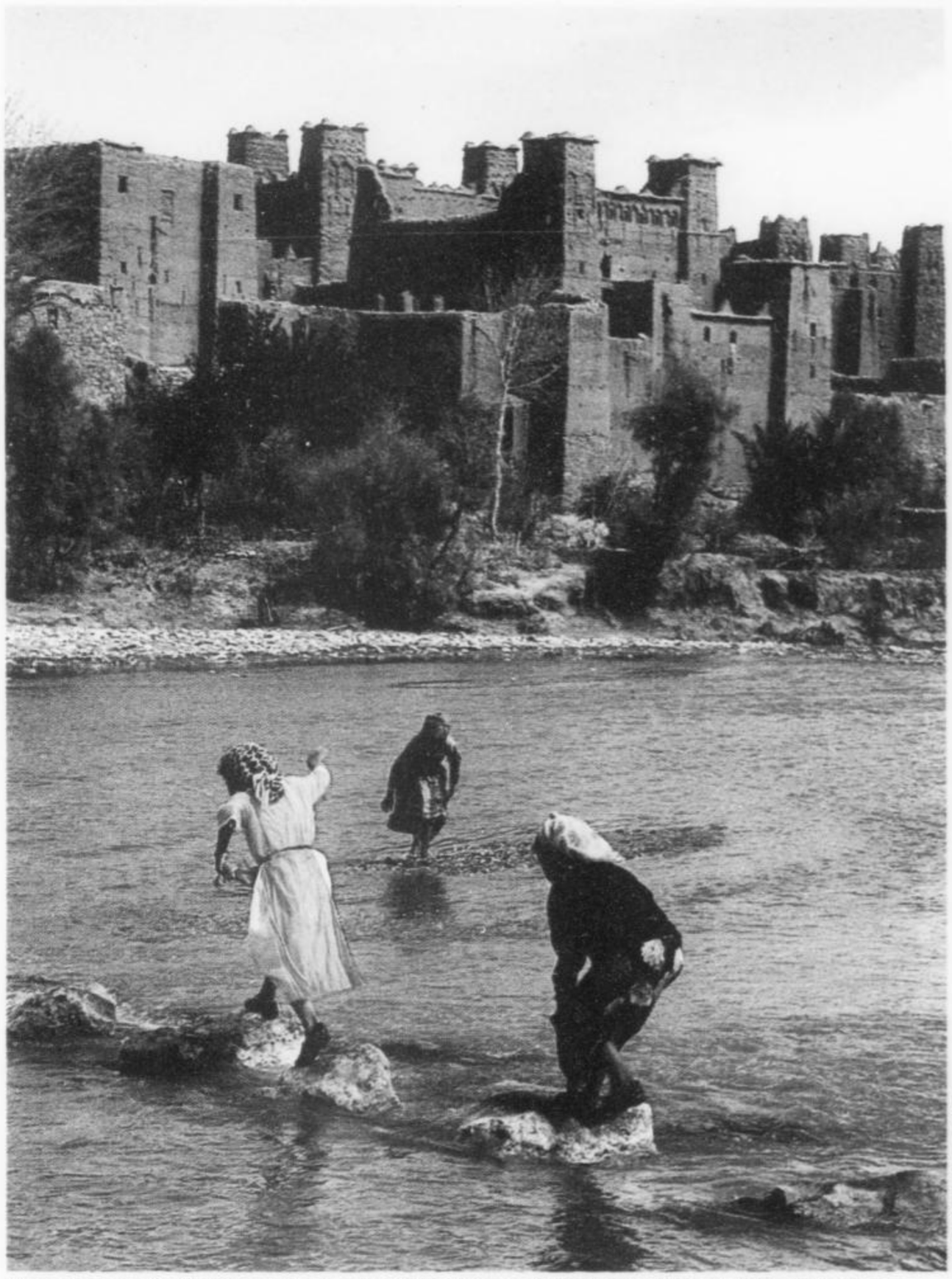
The Ouarzazate region contains 300 of the thousand or so kasbahs that have been identified in Morocco. These structures, which come in all sizes, are notable for the beauty of their architecture and their imaginative use of space. But they are also fragile and many of them are extremely dilapidated.

Single-family dwellings in fortified villages or ksars, into which there is a single entrance, kasbahs are remarkable for their defensive architecture, usually featuring towers atop each of their four corners. The upper parts of some of these two- or three-storey buildings, which have roof-terraces resting on beams made from the trunks of palm-trees, are lavishly decorated.

Fragile and dilapidated

The earthen building material of these fragile constructions does not stand up well to the ravages of time and the weather. A ksar only remains intact for about two centuries. In the past, its occupants would then leave and build another ksar nearby. But social and economic changes in Morocco and the region at large in recent decades has dealt a heavy blow to the constant renewal of the ksars.

The end of the trans-Saharan caravan trade, the disappearance of insecurity, the emergence of a centralized nation-state and the spread of television (reception dishes seem to sprout from all the dwellings) have all helped to overturn the traditional way of life in oasis societies. Nowadays, communities whose members have not emigrated to more prosperous regions use cinder blocks to build small houses outside the old walls and mosques made of stronger material. These buildings are too hot in summer and too cold in winter, but some of them have basic amenities such as water and electricity.



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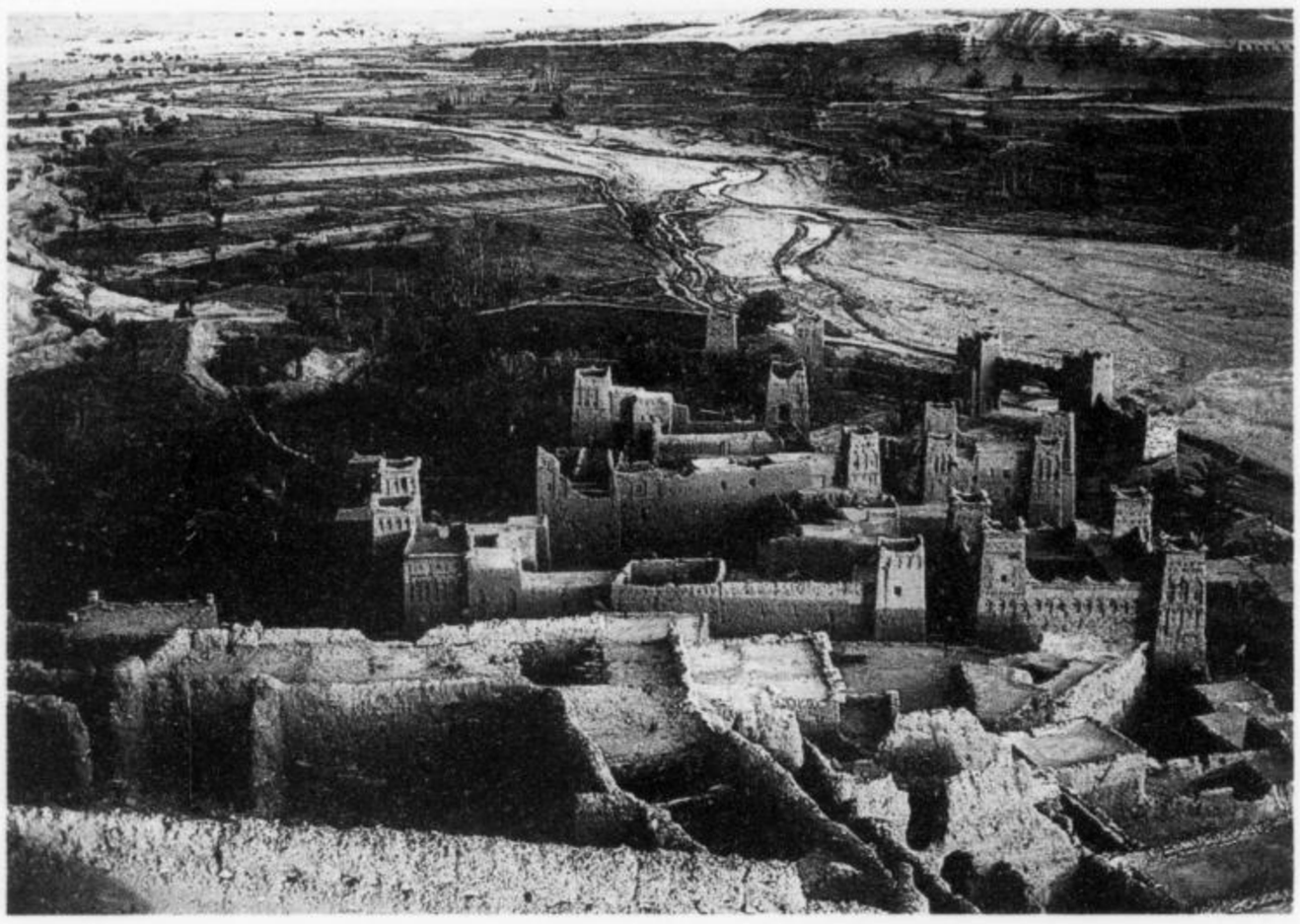
When the river is in full spate, the fortified village of Aït Ben Haddou is difficult to reach.

However, recent events in the village of Aït Ben Haddou, a village about 35 kilometres from Ouarzazate, show there is still hope for the ksars. Thought to have been founded in the 11th century, Aït Ben Haddou has six kasbahs and some 50 ▸

Geographer, professor at Mohammed V University, Rabat, Morocco

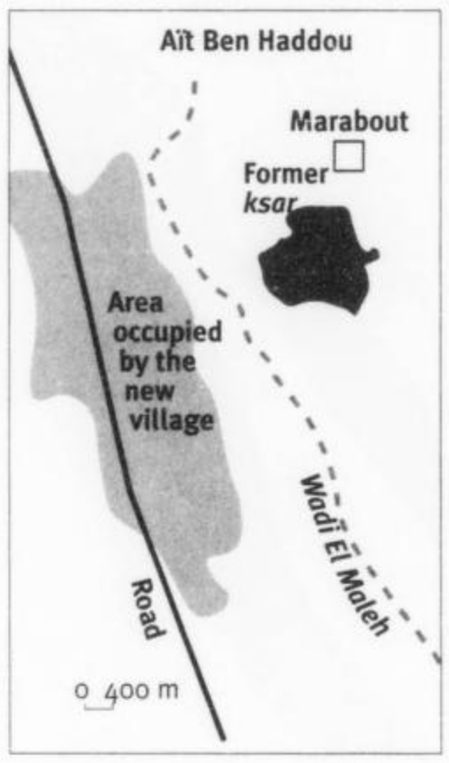


© Bruno Barbey/Magnum, Paris

Classical restoration techniques are of little help in safeguarding the fragile architecture of southern Morocco's ksars. One solution would be to draw back villagers who have abandoned these fortified villages.

▶ houses, all in ruins. Its inhabitants have moved out and over to the other side of the wadi (river), nearer to the main road. Today 84 families live in this modern settlement.

A masterpiece of architecture and landscape, the old village of Aït Ben Haddou was included on UNESCO's World Heritage List in 1987. It was the first ksar to be preserved under a state-sponsored scheme to save the kasbahs of southern Morocco. The programme, launched a decade ago by the ministry of culture and backed by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), UNESCO and the World Tourism Organization (WTO), aims to foster tourism in the region as well as saving endangered items of cultural heritage.



Mixed results

The job has turned out to be an arduous one. Standard restoration methods are little use because the original building materials are not very strong. They can only prolong the life of an earthen building for a few years at most. The only effective way to preserve a ksar like Aït Ben Haddou is to persuade the villagers to return to live in it and care for it on a day-to-day basis. To make it habitable, the ministry of culture has asked other ministries for help. As a result, the public works ministry has looked into how to improve access to the village, which is difficult when the river is in full spate. The education ministry has approved the building of a Koranic school inside the ksar until there are enough children to justify opening a primary school. The national electricity board has agreed to install solar energy equipment.

But the number of people involved and the maze of bureaucracy have meant only some of the goals have so far been achieved. Cleaning and preservation work has been started, architectural surveys of the village houses have been made and a provisional overall plan has been drawn up. The narrow streets have been paved, the banks of the wadi strengthened and a footbridge built to provide access to the ksar when the water level rises. Restoration and renovation work has been done on some covered passageways, the façades of houses, the mosque and the most lavishly-decorated buildings.

But the village has not yet come back to life. Its only inhabitants are three families which never went away because they were too poor. Developments that might lure residents of the new village outside the walls to move back into the old one—such as building an access road and a proper bridge over the wadi and providing drinking water and electricity—are a long way off.

There are several reasons for this. The ministries of culture, housing and tourism are not coordinating their efforts. There is also a shortage of funds because of a general decision to cut public spending. Finally, legal tangles are holding up work on restoring the houses because the owners of the kasbahs—several heirs who are mostly joint owners—now live elsewhere in the country or even abroad.

Because of these problems, the authorities have officially dropped plans to include Aït Ben Haddou and the kasbahs of the south in the list of local tourist "products". They are deemed too fragile and precious to be able to stand up to mass tourism.

Many organized excursions from Marrakesh and Ouarzazate now include a stop at Aït Ben Haddou, which is attracting around 400 visitors a day. The money from this has helped the inhabitants of the new village to do up their houses and buy an electricity generator.

But the inhabitants of the village have not given up hope of getting some income from tourism and have taken up where the government has left off. Several foreign films have been made on the site and the paving of the access track has spawned a modest tourist infrastructure. Twenty-five bazaars and souvenir shops have been opened, eight of them in the old village, as well as four café-restaurants which also offer lodging.

Some emigrants who have returned from abroad have even taken a chance by building a couple of small hotels. Many organized excursions from Marrakesh and Ouarzazate now include a stop at Aït Ben Haddou, which is attracting around 400 visitors a day. The money from this has helped the inhabitants of the new village to do up their houses and buy an electricity generator.

Restoration work inside the ksar is slowly going ahead, and the local people have set up the Aït Aïssa Association for Culture and Development, which keeps a close eye on the restoration work and takes part in meetings about it. Aït Ben Haddou even seems to have started a trend. In a number of other villages people have recently started restoring kasbahs and converting them into small hotels. ■

> But I was impelled by a resolute spirit and the desire to visit these illustrious sanctuaries was hidden in my bosom. . . . And I abandoned my dwelling just as birds abandon their nest.
>
> **Ibn Batutah, traveller and writer from the Maghreb (1304-1377)**

Central Europe: castles gear up for business

Cynthia Guttman

From the Danube to the Baltic, a French-backed initiative is drumming up funds to transform a string of palaces into top-notch hotels

He never dreamt he would return to a free country. But nearly fifty years after fleeing his native Hungary, Lazlo Karolyi is now occupying one wing of the 140-room castle where he lived until the age of 12 before fleeing the advancing Red Army with his family. After the 1956 Hungarian uprising, the castle, a 19th-century neoclassical jewel located outside Budapest, was turned into a centre for abandoned children. "There was absolutely nothing left in it," says Karolyi in a polished British accent. In a pattern found to different degrees throughout Central Europe, collections were dispersed or simply destroyed. "We had a library of 30,000 French and Latin manuscripts that were burnt in the courtyard in 1949. My parents buried some silver and china in the grounds when they left that we have found again." Two years ago, Karolyi accompanied his 88-year-old mother over from the United States to attend a charged reinstatement ceremony: the Red Star adorning the front of the castle was removed and proudly replaced with the restored family crest.

© M. Horvath/Anzenberger/Cormos, Paris

A classical concert in the castle of Szirak, in the Hungarian Tyrol.

Feasibility studies

Now, in his wish to give the neoclassical palace a fresh lease on life, Karolyi is taking part in a project that will eventually transform some 30 to 40 aristocratic residences into a chain of top-notch châteaux-hotels spanning four countries—Hungary, Slovakia, Czech Republic and Poland—a route running from the Danube to the Baltic.

Launched in the early 1990s, the initiative is the brainchild of Christian Dromard, a Frenchman specialized in the field of heritage and tourism. In a context of restructuring in dire economic conditions, tourism from the West was viewed as a potential source of revenue for Central European countries, but restoring the region's considerable wealth of castles could hardly be deemed a priority for financially strapped governments.

As part of a Council of Europe working group on cultural heritage and tourism in Eastern Europe, Dromard put forward a few basic development principles to partners from the region. "The basic premise is that the upgrading of the castles had to be seen as part of an investment and tourist development programme that would help to finance restoration and give historic monuments an income-generating activity while playing up their cultural value. This was readily accepted."

As such, with cultural and tourist authorities in each country, Dromard has spent the past six years drumming up financial support for his cause while traveling across Central Europe with experts on restoration and hotel development to select ideal settings. "Heritage is not a business like any other. The bottom line is that the historical and cultural potential of the buildings must be safeguarded," says Karel Nejdl, head of the Czech Tourist Board. Feasibility studies were conducted for a number of locations. While the first châteaux-hotels will be near capital cities, the project aims, in the long run, to bring tourists to regions that are still largely unexplored by western travellers. ▶

Unesco Courier journalist

► "The idea we have been trying to get across is that monuments are part of a country's tourist offering. As such, they should be regarded as an infrastructure investment, just like the building of an airport or a road. This was the only way that external funding could be obtained for the project," said Dromard. Experience shows that revenue from tourism alone can rarely pay off the cost of restoring castles—Dromard set the average cost at around 30 million French francs ($5 million)—hence the need for state funding and long-term development loans. Gradually, over the past decade, perceiving restoration in the context of economic development has made its way in international financial circles.

Catering with a local flavour

In the past two years, the World Bank and the Council of Europe have made historic monuments eligible for financial aid programmes. As a result, the Hungarian end of the project recently obtained a green light from the Council of Europe's Fund for Social Development while the government has approved the granting of low-interest loans under state guarantee, also for restoration purposes. In the Czech Republic, if a contract is finalized this fall, it will be the first case of international financing for Czech tourism. Although sites have been selected in Slovakia and Poland, financing has been slower in getting off the ground, chiefly due to political and administrative setbacks.

At his end, Dromard and other private partners will finance the cost of outfitting the castles with modern facilities, hiring British or French decorators and local art experts for refurbishing the interiors, and finding managers, chefs and staff who will understand the art of catering with a personal and local touch. The interest for the state, says Dromard, is that the operator is responsible for the upkeep of the site for a given period of time and eventually sells the business back to the owners—whether private or public.

Finding new vocations for Central Europe's rich heritage of castles might be the only way of saving many of them from decay. Most, over the past half century, were stripped of their glamour after being confiscated and declared state property. A select few remained open to the public and were furnished to reflect a particular theme. Portraits and religious art were kept sealed in reserves. But for the most part, palaces were transformed into orphanages, boarding schools, centres for the disabled, retirement homes, summer camps, hospitals or state farms. Some served as hunting lodges for the nomenklatura. Until the early 1990s, the Red Army installed its headquarters and barracks in Gödöllö, the Hungarian summer residence of Emperor Franz Josef and Queen Elisabeth—Empress Sissi.

After the fall of the Iron Curtain, new governments were faced with restitution claims, but only the Czech Republic passed a law by which families or their descendants could reclaim their properties, on condition they had kept their nationality and could prove they had not collaborated with Nazi Germany. In the end, only 10 to 20 per cent of the country's castles were restituted to their former owners. But while going back to one's roots after long years of exile may bring a sense of justice restored, the responsibility is not a light one. Dr Radslav Kinsky, a medical researcher who fled Czechoslovakia in 1958, is now spending his retirement days managing Zdar, following the restitution of the 17th-century castle to him. Slated to be on the châteaux-hotel circuit, part of Zdar will be transformed for this purpose, while the family also envisages opening a cultural centre there, given the location's proximity to the chapel of St John of Nepomuk, a World Heritage site. With forestry revenue earned on his 6,000-hectare estate, Kinsky has financed the restoration of the façade, the roof as well as some of the castle's frescoes.

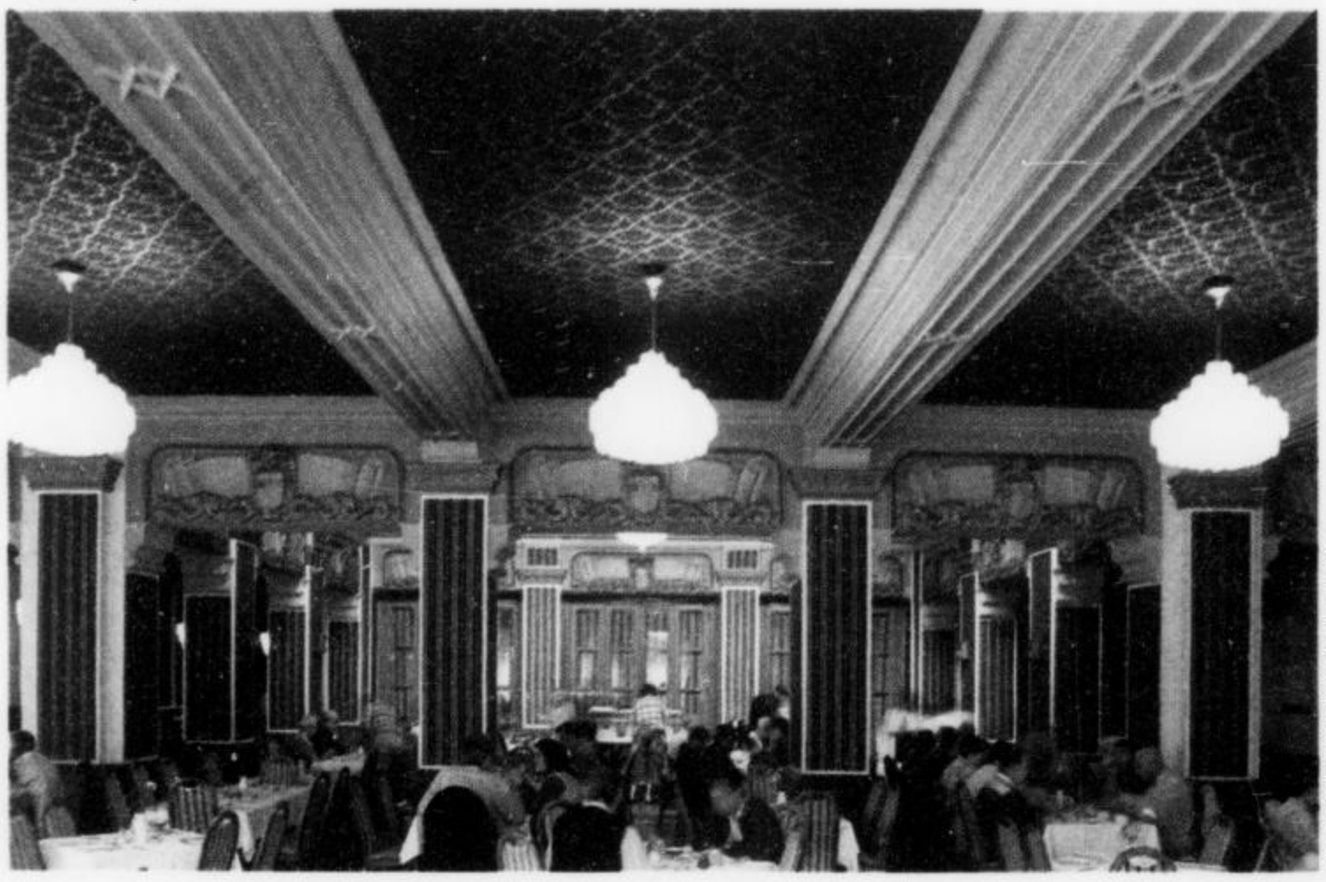
Although in Hungary castles are still officially the property of the state, the Karolyi family has created a foundation for the restoration of their expropriated properties, and more generally, to promote cultural exchange with western Europe. When the state launches a public tender this fall, Karolyi hopes to win it and lease the castle for a 99-year period. "Granted, in Hungary there's a type of nostalgic, romantic fascination with castles, with associations cropping up to save them," says Tamas Fejerdy, a historic monuments expert and country representative for the châteaux-hotels project since its beginning. More importantly he notes, the country approved its first law on historic monuments last year, which clearly delineates the role of the state in matters of safeguarding. Historic monuments have beeen placed under the jurisdiction of the cultural ministry instead of the environment. Funding has also been boosted. "The new government clearly considers that Europe's diversity can be enhanced through the promotion of our heritage," says Fejerdy.

This is also one of the goals of the Karolyi family. Without any descendants, they are intent on transmitting their heritage to future generations. "Even if we had developed along the same lines as the West, we certainly wouldn't be living in the castle. It would be a place where national treasures would be on show for the benefit of all." ■

If you haven't studied, travel.

African proverb

Dining—for those who can afford it—in the Palota chateau-hotel, located in Hungary's Bükk national park.



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The right road for Compostela

Lucía Iglesias Kuntz

Investment, political commitment and respect for heritage have turned a religious centre into a cultural attraction for millions of tourists

© Bruno Barbey/Magnum, Paris

For the last holy year of the millennium, Santiago de Compostela is organizing over one thousand cultural events.

"Buen camino!"—"Have a good journey". For centuries, hundreds of thousands of pilgrims from Denmark, the Netherlands, Italy, France and Portugal, have used this Spanish phrase to greet each other as they trek along one of the nine pilgrims' routes to Santiago de Compostela in northeastern Spain.

In 1999, officials reckon nine million tourists will visit the city, where tradition says St James (Santiago in Spanish), one of Christ's 12 apostles, is buried. Some 150,000 of them will have officially qualified as pilgrims by covering in a spirit of contemplation at least 100 kilometres of the journey on foot or horseback or 150 kilometres by bicycle. The rest will have come by plane, train, buses or cars, drawn by a $30-million programme in which about a thousand events are being staged with funding from national, regional and local authorities. Light and sound displays, exhibitions and classical and modern dance performances will make sure that the last Holy Year of the millennium will be a memorable cultural occasion in Santiago de Compostela.

A second golden age

According to a custom which began in the Middle Ages, whenever July 25, St James's feast day, falls on a Sunday, the Pope grants a full pardon to all Catholics who enter the cathedral through the Holy Door, which is open only in such years, and then do penance and receive the Eucharist.

Holy years, of which there have been 177 since 1428, provide an ideal opportunity to promote the city as a tourist and cultural centre. The last fifteen ▸

Unesco Courier journalist

► years or so have been a second golden age for the pilgrimage to Santiago (the first was in the 11th and 12th centuries), which continues to draw crowds, whether for spiritual or cultural reasons.

In 1991, the Galician authorities launched an ambitious programme to boost regional tourism, focusing on Santiago and the pilgrims' way. The Spanish government and the eight provinces through which the Way passes spent a lot of money marking out the route, preserving its historical features, refurbishing hotels for pilgrims and building footpaths for the pilgrims to use instead of the roads.

Private sector involvement was encouraged and a mascot for the Way was created, named Pelegrín. National and international publicity campaigns were launched, mostly through travelling exhibitions including one called "In the Footsteps of James", which started out from Buenos Aires last October 1 and by December 1999 will have visited Mexico City, Munich, São Paulo, New York, Brussels, London, Santiago de Chile, Dublin, Paris, Toulouse and Bordeaux.

There is plenty of "raw material" of course. The old centre of Santiago de Compostela and its baroque, neoclassical granite buildings have been placed on UNESCO's World Heritage List, and so has the pilgrims' way itself. In 1987, the Council of Europe classified the entire complex of pilgrims' routes to Compostela as a major "European cultural itinerary", describing it as "a repository of collective memory crossed by paths which defy distance, frontiers and incomprehension."

'Today, even if they only want to change a tap, owners have only four or five models to choose from'

And while maintaining its local atmosphere and impressive group of monuments centred on the cathedral, the city has also tried to retain the pattern of urban development which in 1998 won it the European Urban and Regional Planning Award, the European Commission's highest distinction in this field granted every four years. The jury commended the radical steps that have been taken to halt the deterioration of the old quarter and the successful integration of new buildings and infrastructures.

"The old city is now untouchable," says Cristóbal Ramírez, head of the Journalists' Association of the Road to Santiago. "Subsidies have enabled a range of architectural work to be carried out to maintain 17th- and 18th-century façades and structures as well as the interiors of houses and other buildings. Today, even if they only want to change a tap, owners have only four or five models to choose from."

With more than a dozen cultural events a day, including round-table discussions, conferences, shows, lectures and concerts, Santiago is decked out in all its finery. Between now and the end of the year, its streets, restaurants and more than 8,000 hotel rooms will be filled with pilgrims, backpackers and other visitors. Then, just before midnight on December 31, the Holy Door of the cathedral will again be sealed with cement and bricks until the next "holy year", 2004.

But the celebrations will not end with the century, because Santiago has been designated by European ministers of culture as one of the nine "cultural capitals of Europe" for the year 2000, along with Avignon (France), Bergen (Norway), Bologna (Italy), Brussels (Belgium), Cracow (Poland), Helsinki (Finland), Prague (Czech Republic) and Reykjavik (Iceland).

Stones can't talk, but Galicia is a land of legends. On the Portal of Glory, the Romanesque façade of Santiago's cathedral, there is a carving of the Prophet Daniel which features what is reckoned to be the first smile in Romanesque art. From his pedestal, Daniel seems to be looking down at the tourists and—he too—wishing them "Buen camino!". ■

● www.xacobeo.es

Santiago de Compostela is an olive grove with olive trees made of stone. It's as if the sea had spilled over onto the earth.

Antonio Cuéllar Casalduero, Spanish writer (1930)

UNESCO AND CULTURAL TOURISM

Promoting better co-operation between all the stakeholders of tourism is one of UNESCO's main strategies for bringing about more culturally-sensitive policies in this growth industry. During the UN-proclaimed World Decade for Cultural Development (1988-1998), the organization struck up partnerships with the World Tourism Organization (WTO), the World Bank and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), as well as private business, site managers and experts to encourage a more in-depth reflection on how tourism can benefit or harm heritage and cultures. The goal, beyond promoting research and awareness at all levels, is to help states formulate long-term strategies for safeguarding cultural heritage, giving tourists the tools for better understanding it, and ensuring that local populations participate in, and benefit from, the development of tourism.

Besides providing expertise for drawing up World Heritage site management plans, UNESCO supports a range of cultural tourism projects. One, run in co-operation with the Universities of Venice and Rotterdam, involves setting up a network between 20 European historic cities on how to better manage tourist flows and present heritage in more comprehensive ways. Another focuses on drafting a code of conduct with private and public stakeholders for the Sahara, an environmentally fragile region where tourism is expected to grow. As part of UNESCO's Memory of the Future project, funds were secured in 1999 from several tour operators, hotel chains and agencies for cultural heritage programmes in Petra (Jordan), Angkor (Cambodia) and Machu Picchu (Peru).

Tourism, finally, is about promoting a richer dialogue between cultures. This is the essence of several international scientific projects, which have all acquired a tourism dimension in the past decade: the Slave Route project, in co-operation with WTO, foresees the inventory, preservation and restoration of historic monuments and places of memory linked to the transatlantic slave trade in Africa, the Americas and the Caribbean; the Silk Road initiative (also in partnership with WTO), is gradually building up cultural tourism in Central Asian countries, and in the process seeking to revive the memory of strong cultural ties that once linked countries of this region. ■

3 | Reflections

An empire built on the sands

Amy Otchet

© Raymond Reuter/Sygma, Paris

Mass tourism is unavoidable and even desirable according to Gilbert Trigano, one of the Club Méditérranée's founders

He built an empire on the sands of some of the world's most beautiful beaches by wheeling and dealing with kings and presidents. He made a fortune by selling a sun-splashed brand of hedonism with the trademark bikini-clad couple frolicking along a lick of white sand. Meet Gilbert Trigano, one of the two men responsible for starting the world's most famous network of resorts, the Club Meditérranée—better known as the Club Med.

At the age of 78, Trigano's club-days are over but he has found a new role as a consultant to government officials on the tourism industry, which may send shivers up the spines of those devoted to the new school of cultural tourism. Club Med's hallmark lazy get-away in which visitors need not exchange money, let alone venture to a local restaurant, is often cast as the dark side of the industry. "It's become a sin just to use the expression 'mass tourism'," says Trigano, "but that's what we are faced with. Should we be nostalgic and try to return to the past when people didn't travel in groups or should we try to better control the flows?"

The spirit of the times

Ironically, Trigano cannot help but hark back to Club Med's early days in the 1950s, when the resorts consisted of tented camps on pristine beaches of the Mediterranean. "The real success of the club may not have been in the quality of the services but in the way it represented the spirit of the times. We [Trigano and his business partner Gérard Blitz] were young men, survivors of the war. We made a profession out of offering others what we wanted for ourselves: a chance to discover the sea, to breathe deeply and live healthily. There was an incredible desire to discover new things in life and new people."

Trigano maintains that the same trends are intensifying today. Yet there is a hollow ring to his talk about discovering other cultures. The clubs are and have always been removed from surrounding life. The flash of these pleasure domes often seems indecent in poor countries. "It is very easy to criticize along these lines," says a visibly aggravated Trigano, but the bottom line is that tourism brings much-needed money and jobs.

"Besides do you really think that anyone can understand the culture of a country like Mauritius after visiting for eight or 15 days," says Trigano. "People at the club basked in the sun of Spain. They tasted the tomatoes of Tunisia and the grilled mutton of the Berbers in Morocco. They didn't discover these countries but they did get a taste of them."

According to Trigano, it would be irresponsible for the club to dive any deeper into local culture. "In Indonesia, I used to pay actors to stage traditional marriages because I was furious that people wanted to penetrate Buddhist temples to see a ceremony. This would have been totally inappropriate."

Trigano has just returned from Palestine, enchanted by the cultural heritage. Yet he is also concerned, explaining that the impending recognition of the formal state of Palestine will unleash a wave of tourists. "Now is the time to act," says Trigano. "It would be a bit far-fetched for me to play the role of the moralist" and tell the Palestinians what to do, he says. "It is a lot more plausible for me to offer my experience as to how a 'good idea' can get out of hand."

"My role used to be to look for isolated sites of exceptional beauty," says Trigano, and then develop them by brokering deals with the government to bring electricity, drinking water and even small airports. "It is possible to discover and develop a site without destroying it," he insists. But what of places like Cancún in Mexico, the Moroccan beach resort of Agadir, or Tunisia's Isle of Jerba. In all three cases, Club Med was the first to lay the foundations for the tourism industry. Indeed, with a certain pride, Trigano explains that when he and his team arrived over 30 years ago, "there was nothing." Yet he is also the first to admit that "they are now concrete horrors." Was this inevitable? "Not entirely," he says. For Trigano, the error lies not in developing a site but in overdeveloping it—and to avoid this, "authorities must have the courage to issue laws" to regulate the industry's growth. "I'm not ashamed of anything I have built," says Trigano. As for the others. . . . ■

Unesco Courier journalist

Philosophy of a guidebook guru

Tony Wheeler

The man behind *Lonely Planet*, a guidebook series originally designed for travellers eager to quit the beaten track, defends his record

"Bali was wonderful until your guidebook came along," said a member of the audience, during a talk I gave recently about the pitfalls of tourism. "Why are you sending all those visitors to Burma, don't you know how horrible the government is?" queried another, rather angrily.

Questions like these are raised almost every time I speak about my life as a guidebook publisher. According to this line of reasoning, I should be ashamed of myself for helping to ruin dozens of places round the world, not to mention propping up a string of corrupt regimes. In my view, the situation is rather different.

Publisher of the *Lonely Planet* guidebooks

When my wife Maureen and I founded Lonely Planet Publications over 25 years ago the world was, from a tourism point of view, a much less crowded place. I can easily measure that growth by simply glancing at my bookshelf—our first *South East Asia on a Shoestring* guidebook covered the region in 144 pages. The latest 10th edition takes 936 pages to do the same job, and if you added up the individual guidebooks we have for countries in the region they would tot up to over 5,000 pages, an information overload no visitor would contemplate carrying around. Maureen and I put that first regional guidebook together in a backstreet Singapore hotel room. Our entire staff could fit into one car to go out for lunch. Today they're scattered around four offices on three continents and it would be standing room only in a 747.

Has big tourism ruined Bali?

We started with a very simple philosophy: we were the small-time operators who couldn't compete head on with the big publishers in London or New York. So we would produce guidebooks to the places nobody had ever thought of writing about. In retrospect it was an amazingly clever idea. By the time the "big guys" had woken up to the tourist boom that was taking off from airports all over the world we had carved out a name for ourselves as publishers for the new destinations suddenly topping the statistics lists. This hard-won reputation gave us the stature to move on to the more established and familiar tourist destinations. Today, however, there are no undiscovered corners. Name the destination and there are probably half a dozen guidebooks about it.

So have we "ruined" Bali and dozens of other untouched paradises? Have we demolished pristine cultures by drowning them in a never-ending flow of tourists? Absolutely not. For a start we're only one influence amongst many. If guidebooks were the huge influence many people seem to assume they must be, airlines would be welcoming me aboard with open arms and upgrading my tickets. In fact I'm just another anonymous "bum on a seat".

While many places have taken off as tourist destinations during the last 25 years, Bali offers a fine example of how the boom arises. Turn the clock back to the 60s and you find a virtually

THE EXPANDING GUIDEBOOK MARKET: A SAMPLING OF THE LEADERS

The classic: In 1926, Brittany became the first of Michelin's fine print green guides, a collection that now counts over 100 titles and is translated into nine languages including Japanese and Hebrew. In 1997, the French publisher launched a more upbeat weekend escapade series, which now counts 40 titles and is translated into English.

Still a bargain: First published in 1957, Arthur Frommer's acclaimed *Europe on $5 a day* is still geared to the value-conscious traveller. Only the figure in the title changes with the times–up to $50 a day in 1999. Guides are published to over 25 countries and so far only translated into Portuguese.

More upscale: Not for the backpacker market, *Insight* guides were launched in 1970 and now cover 77 countries. Translated into 10 languages, including Chinese, Russian and Thai. Bestsellers include guides to Australia, Canada, India and Thailand.

Asia first: Launched in 1973 with *Across Asia on the cheap*, Lonely Planet has expanded its offer to 250 guidebooks. Bestsellers in English include guides to Southeast Asia, Western Europe, India and Australia. So far, only translated into French.

Humour and value: Initially turned down by 19 publishing houses in 1973, the *Guide du Routard*, a series valued for its refreshing, humorous approach and lists of good value hotels and restaurants, now boasts 75 titles–all updated every year.

Steady growth: Rough Guides entered the market in 1982 with a title on Greece and have since grown to a collection of over 100 guides that pride themselves on providing in-depth coverage with a writer's touch. Bestsellers are not guides to countries but to the Internet and events of the millennium. Translated into 12 languages.

Show and tell: In 1992, the French publisher Gallimard inaugurated a new guidebook concept–*Eyewitness Guides*–in which illustrations such as 3D and cutaway views of palaces, monuments and museums take on just about as much importance as the text. The full-colour, glossy collection now counts 90 titles with translations into 13 languages, including Chinese and Polish. ■

© Alain Pinoges, Paris

On Kuta Beach in Bali (Indonesia), a tourist indulges in a massage offered by a local woman.

tourist-less Bali—not because we hadn't published a guidebook about the island Jawaharlal Nehru, the first prime minister of independent India, dubbed "the morning of the world". In fact, the Indonesian government was distinctly unwelcoming to all overseas visitors. But even the subsequent change in government did not suddenly open the floodgates of tourism. Bali didn't take off as a major international destination until airlines started scheduling regular flights, until big hotels were built, until the island's small, specialist image and reputation was disseminated to a mass audience.

Has this leap to big tourism ruined Bali? Well, first of all tourism is not the only agent of change. Recent Asian economic mayhem apart, Indonesia's economy has been on a roll for the past 20 years which Bali has clearly been a part of, whether it's been the green revolution doubling rice output or the cottage industry clothing manufacturing making "made in Bali" a familiar label worldwide. Cultural changes have also taken root independently of those linked to tourism. It's hard to believe that tourism has a tenth of the influence of the Hollywood videos now found in even the most remote corners of the world.

Tread lightly and be culturally aware

So tourism is not the only agent of change but has it had such a terrible impact? Clearly, it's brought in a lot of money. We old Bali hands may regret how much noisier, how much more crowded and modern the island has become. However, I doubt whether you'll find many Balinese complaining. Park the motorcycle and go back to walking to the market? No thanks. Flick the lights off and go back to oil lamps at night? Not a chance. And most important of all, go back to the days when harvests were uncertain and rice shortages were a regular occurrences? Well would you?

Progress does not necessarily take a toll on culture. In fact it's often quite the opposite, and again Bali is a fine example of the positive effects of tourism. The island's much-vaunted artistic skills were essentially moribund when the first Western visitors turned up in the 1930s. They prompted a revival but nothing compared to today's artistic boom. Sure there's a lot of mass market art being churned out but that's just a broad foundation for a smaller output of higher quality work. In Bali tourism has contributed to change but this change has certainly not ruined the place. The dancers may be performing for tourists in hotels rather than the nobility in the palaces but they are still dancing. Quite possibly they wouldn't be if there weren't such a high demand among visitors.

I believe guidebooks have played a positive part in that change and in part that's because guidebooks have changed as well. The modern guidebook is far more than just a list of hotels, restaurants and "how to" information. We firmly believe that better informed visitors are not only better visitors but also visitors who enjoy themselves more. If you know something about the dance, the music, the ceremonies, the architecture, the food, the customs—central elements of a culture—you enjoy the place more. I think we've always been aware of that and looking back at our early guidebooks I'm encouraged to see that we've always stressed the importance of fitting in, treading lightly and being culturally aware. We now have much larger budgets to work with and can afford to put more time, energy and expenditure in producing sections on specialist cultural issues. Of course we're not alone in this activity, other guidebook publishers are equally aware that a modern guidebook has to be much more than simply a manual for the practicalities of travel.

We old Bali hands may regret how much noisier, how much more crowded and modern the island has become. However, I doubt whether you'll find many Balinese complaining

In countries like India with a wide range of religions some understanding of that rich backdrop can make the travel experience immeasurably more fulfilling and our India guide includes a section introducing the country's varied range of religions. In a region like Tibet, where religion underpins every element of everyday life, our guide tries to introduce Buddhist iconography, the importance of pilgrimages and the monastic lifestyle.

The evidence that modern travellers demand this sort of coverage is easy to measure. Sure there's a lot more tourism these days but the growth in guidebook publishing has far outstripped the expansion in the number of travellers.

Tourists appreciate that a good guidebook can be a money- and trouble-saver that quickly pays for itself, but they're equally aware that it can make their travels a more rewarding experience. I firmly believe that travel and culture can live together, and good guidebooks can help make that a reality. ■

All travel has its advantages. If the passenger visits better countries, he may learn to improve his own, and if fortune carries him to worse, he may learn to enjoy it.

Samuel Johnson, English scholar and critic (1709-1784)

Towards an ethics of tourism

Cynthia Guttman

With pressure on sites and cultures set to rise in the coming years, initiatives are multiplying to reduce tourism's negative impacts and promote awareness at all levels

As glossy travel catalogues thicken by the year and U.S. companies take reservations from citizens hoping to become the first tourists in outer space, concerted efforts are on the rise to make the industry—and the traveller—more responsible.

Over the past few months, the World Tourism Organization (WTO) has been consulting NGOs, businesses and governments to draw up a Global Code of Ethics for Tourism that will be presented to its General Assembly in Santiago, Chile, in September 1999. "There are many voluntary codes of conduct produced by associations and companies but there is really a demand from all the partners in the tourism industry for one simple reference that could be a base for all other initiatives," explains WTO secretary-general Francesco Frangialli. Such codes aim to put forward guidelines that provide the industry and other stakeholders with an overall framework for applying sustainable tourism practices.

The first article sets the tone: "The actors in tourism development and tourists themselves are duty-bound to observe the social and cultural traditions and practices of all peoples, including national minorities and indigenous people." The code condemns the "exploitation of other people in any form, notably sexual" and stresses that tourism policies should benefit local communities, contribute to preserving and embellishing heritage, and allow traditional crafts and folklore to flourish. A mechanism of implementation will be proposed for solving potential conflicts between, for instance, a tour operator and a host community.

Contradictory interests

While the World Council of Churches and other associations started to draw attention to the destructive impact of tourism on local cultures in the late 1960s, it is only over the past decade that the subject has turned into a much broader debate, partly dictated by the steady growth in the number of international travellers. For the first time, in April 1999 tourism was featured on the agenda of the United Nations Sustainable Development Commission, which gathers every year to discuss follow-up to the Rio Earth Summit. Representatives of industry, local governments, NGOs and trade unions broadly agreed that mechanisms had to be put in place to ensure that tourism development was sustainable—i.e. that long-term social and environmental benefits are placed ahead of short-term gains—and underlined the critical role that local governments have to play in defining projects and assessing to what extent they benefit their constituencies.

Underlying these trends is the notion that tourism cannot be simply considered as a commercial activity governed by market criteria. "National tourism policies have to be developed by multidisciplinary teams that not only include tour operators but also archaeologists, anthropologists, historians and geographers," says Doudou Diène, of UNESCO's Division for Intercultural Projects. This strategy is being promoted with WTO. Contradictory interests may often be at stake. "There's a strong lobby seeking to cut down prices and taxes," says Hervé Barré, of UNESCO's tourism, culture and development programme. "On the other hand, culture, from an economic standpoint needs the price of entry tickets to be high enough in order to cover costs."

'Respect makes for the best of encounters'

Ultimately, both private and public sectors have a role to play in safeguarding heritage and cultures and also in educating visitors. In 1988, the World Travel and Tourism Council launched a video series aimed at airlines and schools starring a cartoon character who returns from extinction to help create awareness of the impact of tourism on the environment. The British NGO Tourism Concern has produced its first inflight video that highlights concerns Gambians have about tourism. It has also made a video for secondary schools, which examines the country as a destination through the eyes of advertisers, tourists and local people. "Ultimately, we'd like to believe that someone going on holiday could make real choices by taking the most ethical product, but that's still a long way in coming," says Patricia Barnett, head of Tourism Concern.

There are signs of change. At the World Tourism Fair held in March in Paris, the French tour operator Atalante presented the "Traveller's Ethical Charter". Affirming that "respect makes for the best of encounters", it provides advice on photographing, dress, gifts, tipping, environmental protection and ways to help the local economy.

Atalante is the first to know that educating the traveller is not so simple, no matter how much preparation is invested in a trip. A few years ago, before leaving on an excursion to Ethiopia's Omo Valley, Atalante obtained tacit approval from travellers that they would not take pictures of local tribes right upon arrival. On the spot however, a few could simply not refrain. . . . ■

He that traveleth into a country before he hath some entrance into the language, goeth to school, and not to travel.

Francis Bacon, English philosopher and man of letters (1561-1626)

UNESCO Courier journalist

HUMANITARIAN INTERVENTION: A CONTROVERSIAL RIGHT

Olivier Corten

© Barbey/Magnum, Paris

The first case of armed intervention on humanitarian grounds by Western countries was in Kurdish areas of northern Iraq.

The crisis in Kosovo has fuelled the debate between supporters and opponents of the right of humanitarian intervention. The contributions below were made at the beginning of June 1999

The term "right" or "duty" of "intervention"—to which the word "humanitarian" was soon added—was coined in the late 1980s by Mario Bettati, Professor of International Public Law at the University of Paris II, and by the French politician Bernard Kouchner, one of the founders of the aid organization Médecins sans frontières (Doctors without Borders).

As Kouchner put it, they were taking issue with "the old-fashioned theory of state sovereignty, used to fend off criticism of massacres." The idea caught on quickly, especially with the emergence of a new world order in which values like democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights were supposed to be top priorities. The need to help peoples in distress would mean that everyone had a "duty to assist a people in danger" which would override the traditional legal rules.

Despite the generous intentions of its advocates, the fuzziness of such a right immediately raised questions and even criticism. Was it simply a moral right or was it a principle to be incorporated into international law? For centuries, international law has been based on the sovereignty of the state. As a result, a state is only bound by a legal obligation—especially by an obligation to protect human rights—if it has agreed to it by ratifying a treaty or by adhering to an existing customary rule. Human rights have widely varying legal status all over the world, and persons are better protected in some countries than in others.

A challenge to sovereignty

Sovereignty also means that a country which has violated human rights cannot be prosecuted unless it accepts or has accepted the authority of a court. Except by going through regional bodies such as the European Court of Human Rights and the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, it is thus very hard to get a government convicted of human rights violations by an international court. And even if a conviction is obtained, there is no way of guaranteeing the sentence will be carried out. Sovereignty has proved ▶

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► incompatible with the existence of a kind of worldwide "international police force".

The doctrine of "the right to intervene" is an attempt to challenge this traditional legal structure by calling into question the very concept of sovereignty it is based on. The power of the state, it says, must yield to a "principle of extreme urgency"—the need for a minimum protection of human rights.

Humanitarian aid must therefore be delivered without regard to national frontiers, or whether or not a country has pledged to respect a rule, the jurisdiction of a court or the powers of an international police force. It is no longer tenable to bow to legal formalism which, as Kouchner says, is tantamount to accepting that it could be "permissible, albeit discreditable, to massacre one's own people."

Many legal experts have strongly criticized the view of traditional international law held by supporters of the right to intervene. First, under no circumstances can a government claim it is "lawful" to massacre its own population on the grounds that everything that goes on inside the country is an "internal matter". All states have formally agreed that they should respect fundamental rights, such as the right to life and respect for the physical person, and that genocide is unlawful as far as their own people are concerned and therefore on their own territory. They decided in "a sovereign manner" to respect these principles, so they must respect them in a sovereign manner too.

Where a massive violation occurs, retaliatory measures and reprisals can be taken in political, diplomatic, economic and financial ways. An embargo, even without United Nations intervention, could be envisaged against a state or a group which is violating a people's most basic rights. Such a measure, quite a formidable one, has been used against certain states, including Argentina at the time of the Falklands war, the Soviet Union after its military intervention in Afghanistan and more recently against Haiti and Burundi in response to coups d'état in those countries.

The United Nations Security Council can also declare that massive violations of human rights are a threat to "international peace and security" and duly authorize military intervention (article 42 of the United Nations Charter). It has done this on several occasions (see box). So on closer inspection, most of the operations presented as arising from "the right of humanitarian intervention" are actually applications of existing legal mechanisms. It is quite wrong to say that traditional international law is incompatible with effective protection of human rights. In fact the problem is usually more political than legal, in the sense that what is needed is not new rules but the better use of existing ones.

Under no circumstances can a government claim it is 'lawful' to massacre its own population on the grounds that everything that goes on inside the country is an 'internal matter'

These political obstacles, especially the right to exercise a veto in the Security Council, mean that nobody is going to claim international law is perfectly adequate to protect human rights. But despite the system's shortcomings, many analysts think that it is less bad than one that would include a broad right of humanitarian intervention.

The principle of non-intervention is the result of a historic battle waged by the weakest countries. Throughout the 19th century, they were subjected to colonialism and imperialism, which also made themselves out to be defending "civilized" values. On many occasions, the humanitarian argument was used to justify military action by Western states against the Ottoman Empire, as well as in Africa and the Far East.

The United Nations Charter did not put an end to such practices, but at least it gave countries that were attacked the opportunity to invoke the law to oppose the use of force. A return to a situation where there was a right to intervene which could, hypothetically, involve sidestepping UN decisions, would mean the world's most powerful states could set themselves up as sole judges of what humanity supposedly needs. Once again, might would be right.

Colonial memories

The question of double standards is often raised. How can one claim an action is humanitarian if it clearly arises from considerations of *realpolitik*, which are the only possible explanation why some states that violate the most basic human rights

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- **Fernando Teson, *Humanitarian Intervention: An Inquiry into Law and Morality*, New York, Transnational Publishers, 1988.**
- **Mario Bettati, *Le droit d'ingérence: mutation de l'ordre international*, Paris, Odile Jacob publishers, 1996.**
- **Mario Bettati and Bernard Kouchner, *Le devoir d'ingérence: peut-on les laisser mourir?*, *Paris*, Denoël publishers, 1987.**
- **Olivier Corten and Pierre Klein, *Droit d'ingérence ou obligation de réaction?*, Brussels, Bruylant publishers, 2nd edition, 1996.**

ACTION ON GROUNDS OF 'HUMANITARIAN INTERVENTION'

The "right to intervene" came to public attention for the first time when military action against Iraq was taken by several Western countries in April 1991.[1] The operation was presented as a measure to protect the Kurds, who were being harshly oppressed by the Iraqi authorities. Respect for human rights would from now on be enforced through action by the "international community", through the appropriate institutions or by certain states which were prepared to defend this principle. The United Nations Security Council, as on all subsequent occasions, declared the situation a "threat to international peace and security".

The same reason was used by the Council to justify Operation Restore Hope in Somalia from late 1992. Officially, it was meant to put an end to anarchy there and restore conditions in which people could survive. In 1994, France carried out Operation Turquoise in Rwanda, ostensibly to protect its inhabitants from a genocidal war that was tearing the country apart. On similar grounds there have also been military interventions in Bosnia and Herzegovina (1994-95), Liberia, Sierra Leone, Albania (1997) and in Kosovo (1999). ■

1 The international action against Iraq after Iraq invaded a sovereign state, Kuwait, is by definition outside the purview of the "right to intervene".

© Trygve Bolstad/Lineair, Arnhem

The Rwandan case: in 1994, France led Operation Turquoise to protect populations from the genocidal war tearing the country apart.

are let off the hook? The Palestinian situation is the one most often cited in this respect. This probably points to the fundamental problem raised by the "right to intervene"—that it is not clearly defined.

Mario Bettati (see below) illustrates this ambiguity when he defines "the right to intervene" largely in terms of opposition to a restrictive, rigid interpretation of sovereignty. "The term just by itself has no legal content," he says. "It only acquires any when it is accompanied by the adjective 'humanitarian'. By virtue of the purpose it gives to intervention, the adjective removes the unlawful aspect which everyone associates with it. A lawyer would prefer the expression 'right to provide humanitarian assistance', which defines the purpose more clearly and sounds less like a subjective and implicit clash—which after all it isn't—with the anti-colonialist principles of 'non-intervention' and 'non-interference.' "[1]

Ambiguities

And so it is hardly surprising that this doctrine, which might seem attractive in theory, has led to and is still leading to many abuses in practice. The recent example of the war in Kosovo may be seen to embody all the ambiguities of a "right to intervene" exercised, in the name of the international community, by a coalition of the world's biggest military powers. ■

1 Un droit d'ingérence?, *Revue générale de droit international public*, 1991, p. 644.

THE FIRST LESSONS OF KOSOVO

Olivier Corten and Mario Bettati

Olivier Corten and Mario Bettati agree on some points but differ over the legitimacy of NATO intervention

The member states of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) decided on March 24, 1999 to start the massive bombing of Yugoslavia on the grounds that they were defending Kosovar populations of Albanian origin in the name of the universal values of the international community. Olivier Corten believes that classic international law, which would have required a prior resolution by the UN Security Council, was ignored on the grounds that it was outmoded: a double veto by Russia and China would have been a formal obstacle that was inappropriate in such an emergency.

Mario Bettati, a leading advocate of "the right to intervene", is Professor of International Public Law at the University of Paris II.

Olivier Corten

Making Kosovo a milestone in the growth of a right of humanitarian intervention may turn out to be very embarrassing for its supporters. It is virtually impossible to say that, at the end of the day, the intervention will have improved the humanitarian situation. The deportations and atrocities the Kosovars of Albanian origin have been subjected to are not a direct result of intervention, but that is irrelevant because the consequences of intervention were not only foreseeable but were predicted by many foreign observers.

And this is the dilemma. Either the Western planners have good intentions but have carried them out incompetently, thereby losing all credibility as guarantors of respect for the law, or else they are competent, but their motives are perhaps less humanitarian than they publicly proclaim. The second of these possibilities clearly seems to be more likely. What's more, NATO's passivity in equally serious situations elsewhere (Angola, Afghanistan, Sierra Leone, Rwanda, Kurdistan) makes it even harder to defend the thesis of "humanitarian" intervention.

This may be why many states refused to support it. The Islamic world has widely condemned the deportations and atrocities but has not taken a clear stand on the legitimacy of military intervention. The Rio Group, which includes nearly all the Latin American countries, has condemned the deportations, atrocities and military intervention, and has called for the United Nations Charter to be respected. Most member countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS, which embraces most of the former Soviet republics) adopted the same position.

India's representative on the United Nations Security Council said on March 24 that "no country, group of countries or regional ▶

► arrangement can arrogate to itself the right to take arbitrary and unilateral military action against others. . . . we have been told that the attacks are meant to prevent violations of human rights. Even if that were to be so, it does not justify unprovoked military aggression. . . . What is disturbing is that both international law and the authority of the Security Council are being flouted by countries that claim to be champions of the rule of law. . . . The Nonaligned Movement [has] repeatedly said that the United Nations cannot be forced to abdicate its role in peacekeeping."

Opponents of the intervention also include countries as diverse as Namibia, South Africa, Libya, Gabon and Iraq. So to claim that NATO's action reflects the will of the "international community" as a whole has ideological overtones. In fact, many countries fear that this kind of precedent will legitimize a new role for NATO as a "world policeman" and open the way to selective actions to serve the interests and meet the concerns of powerful countries. The attitude of NATO member states, which say that the International Court of Justice at The Hague is not competent to hear the complaint lodged with it by Yugoslavia, only confirms this fear.

In these circumstances, advocating the right of intervention risks being associated with a return to the gunboat diplomacy which the authors of the United Nations Charter, especially the Latin Americans, set out to eliminate.

Mario Bettati

The intervention in Kosovo both is and is not a question of the right of humanitarian intervention. To begin with, nobody disputes that the Serbian regime is guilty of serious human rights violations on its own soil, in Kosovo. This is grounds for legal intervention, and the recent indictment of five of its leaders by the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia resoundingly confirms that.

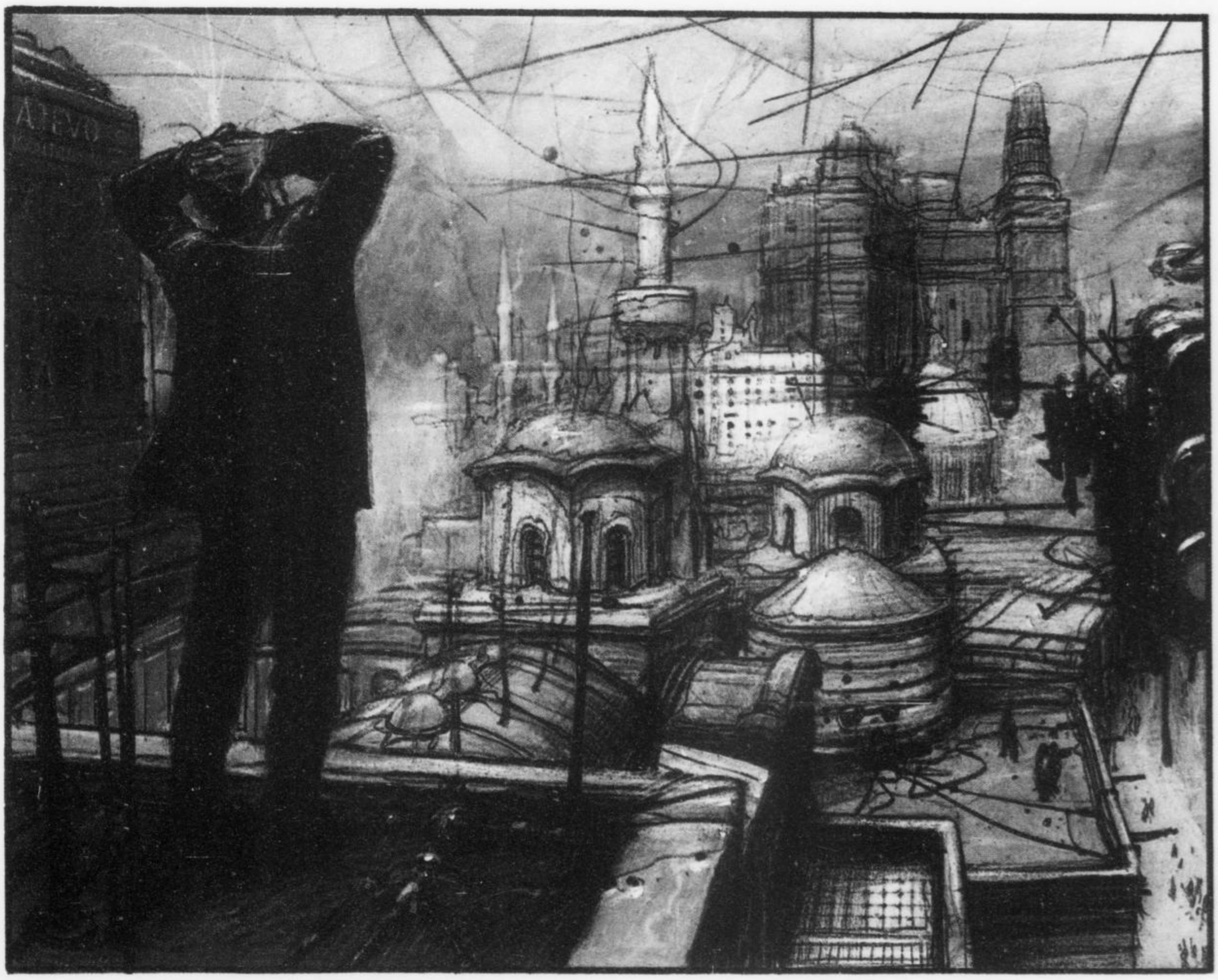
The nature of the intervention has also been tacitly accepted by the international community. The Security Council refused on March 26, by 12 votes out of 15, to condemn the air attacks. And on April 16, the UN Human Rights Commission, by 44 votes out of 51, condemned "ethnic cleansing", while the opponents of this condemnation had stressed that it would be tantamount to justification of the bombing. These two votes provided an implicit legal basis for the bombing. Finally, the intervention was not unilateral, as in a classic colonial operation, but multilateral.

However the purpose of exercising the right of humanitarian intervention is to help the victims. First by staying the hand of the executioner. But not only have the victims not been protected but the executioner has grown tougher: the announced aim of the intervention and the result achieved by it are poles apart. Second, by providing free access to the victims so they can be helped. However, no humanitarian organization has been able to set foot in either Serbia or Kosovo. Third, free access is still without the necessary support of an accompanying armed force, in this case, intervention on the ground.

The Kosovo precedent has advanced the cause of the right to intervene because of the indictment, for the first time, of a sitting head of state. It has also made people aware that the right to intervene on humanitarian grounds is necessary, but it has shown that in the field, the present half-measures are giving a flawed, even false view of its application. In short, the right has become more popular, but the exercise of it to help the victims has run into political obstacles. ■

In Blace (Macedonia), refugees from Kosovo await food distribution from the Red Cross.

© Alex Majoli/Magnum, Paris



"To cry out in a city whose memory is filled with bombs and death is absurd, pathetic and pointless. . ." writes Enki Bilal in *Le sommeil du monstre* ("The Sleeping Monster") published by Les Humanoïdes Associés, Geneva, 1998.

WAR COMICS: THE NEW REALISM

Antonio Altarriba Ordoñez

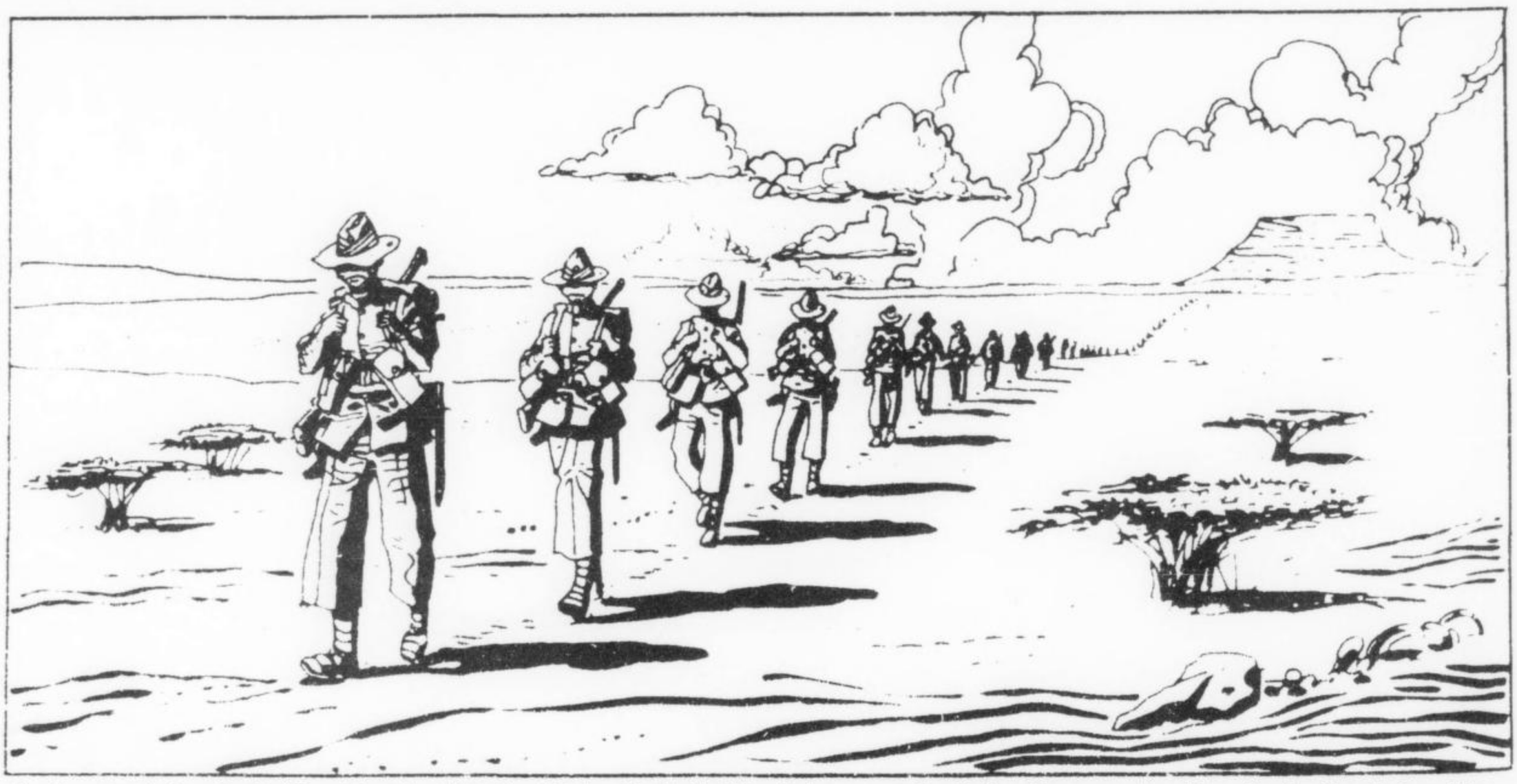
Comic strip authors today are tackling the horrors of war with a critical eye

August 1993. In shell-battered Sarajevo, three newborn babies, Nike Hatzfeld, Leyla Mirkovic and Amir Fazlagic, are being fed with milk in Kosevo Hospital. One is Croat, another Serb and the third Muslim. But what does that matter? All three of them have lost their parents. They have come into a world torn by suffering and they must endure the same distress. They are children of war.

Spanish writer

Thirty-three years later, in 2026, their paths cross again. They are now living in a society where religious fundamentalism, biological manipulation and historical revisionism are the pillars of a system to which they do not belong. They have lived different lives, but their destinies have been shaped by their common past, a wound that refuses to heal. They are still prisoners in a ruined hospital.

This is the story-line of *Le sommeil du monstre* ("The Sleeping Monster"), a comic book by the Yugoslav-born French artist Enki Bilal, published in 1998. Through its richly textured narrative and drawing the book broaches several key themes, including the psychological impact of war. After the rubble of warfare has been cleared away, the emotional wounds remain, although they are never mentioned by the military in their combat reports. Wars play havoc with memories and feed our imagination. From ancient times to today's video games, warfare has been a common subject of fiction. The "poetics" of destruction dominates our myths, as a way of sublimating or exorcising violence. And comic strips are no exception to the rule. ▸



Extrait de l'ouvrage *Les Scorpions du désert*, Hugo Pratt/© Casterman-Cong.sa. Tournai, Belgium

The characters in Hugo Pratt's "Desert Scorpions" (1969), which is set in North Africa, feel no sense of patriotism. They are resigned to a situation they find revolting. Aware that they are victims of interests beyond their control and caught up in the maelstrom of history, they try to make sense of their lives. In this state of general alienation, all points of view are comprehensible–or at least justifiable. So soldiers of rival armies end up by fraternizing. As one of the characters puts it, real men have no flag.

A quick, superficial look at comic books might give the impression that conflict is their dominant theme. Indeed, some of the best-known series often turn to fighting and brutality to resolve conflicts. Some people think comic strips are an invitation to aggressive behaviour, even inciting people to violence. In fact, the opposite is true these days. Some comic books now contain sharp criticism and lucid analysis of war. Gone are the days when their pages were filled with war propaganda.

Goodies and baddies

The 20th century has had its fill of wars and hardly anywhere in the world has been spared. However, comic books deal mainly with the Second World War, which has provided a seemingly inexhaustible quantity of material. Trailing way behind come the war in Viet Nam, the Korean War, the First World War, the Spanish Civil War, the Algerian war of independence and the Sino-Japanese war.

The setting is often the same: a land devastated by explosions, burnt-out cities and ravaged countryside. Only the geographical surroundings change. Through impenetrable forests, across arid deserts, frozen wastes or tropical islands, a soldier makes his way, advancing or retreating and observing the world around him. With him, the reader can visit countryside which has either been spared massacres or has suffered their terrible consequences. Most authors use a lot of background material and are scrupulous about details of history, weapons and uniforms. They know the credibility of their story depends largely on such detail.

War is a subject that lends itself well to a medium like comic books, just as adventures and heroism often do. The characters frequently find themselves in extreme situations. It is at such moments of great tension, when the spectre of death looms over the protagonists, that courage or cowardice, self-assertion or trauma are revealed. There's no room for ambiguity

The new authors criticize war by using humour, attacking vested interests and analysing the psychology of the characters

"Stormtroopers" (1968), by the Italian artist Bonvi, is one of few comic strips to use war as a backcloth for humour. It deals with German soldiers in the Second World War and replaces the usual stereotype of discipline and cruelty with one of stupidity and cowardice. Bonvi shows life on the sidelines of war, with troops more inclined to malinger than to fight. He creates a theatre of the absurd with macabre overtones. The balloon in this frame reads: "Sergeant, I want you to tell the soldiers that when they attend to their physical needs, they don't have to stand to attention in the presence of an officer!"

¡SARGENTO! ¡QUIERO QUE EXPLIQUE A LOS SOLDADOS QUE CUANDO ATIENDEN A SUS PROPIAS NECESIDADES FISIOLOGICAS ESTAN EXENTOS DE PONERSE FIRMES AL PASO DE UN SUPERIOR!

© Franco Bonvicini

on the battlefield. It's a place of extreme commitment and fierce loyalty to exemplary values and attitudes. Even today it can still provide inspiration for epics.

Goodbye to propaganda

There are many kinds of comic strips about war in which the characters perform heroic deeds in a sequence of adventures. Although these stories explain neither the causes of the conflict nor the interests at stake for each side, the behaviour of the characters makes very clear who are the heroes and who are the villains. Pitted against tyranny, injustice and appalling horrors are an almost reckless courage and spirit of sacrifice. The two sides may be engaged in a conflict between different sets of values, but what matters most is victory.

and not much interested in stories that praise patriotism or present the battlefield as a theatre for courageous deeds and heroic victories. Taking the opposite tack to comic strips that peddle violent conflict, the new authors criticize war by using humour, attacking vested interests and analysing the psychology of the characters. Among the most representative figures of this trend are the Italians Hugo Pratt and Bonvi, and the French artist Jacques Tardi (see illustrations).

This kind of comic strip depicts soldiers who are paralysed with fear, know little about the cause they are supposed to be defending, and are mainly concerned with trying to save their own skin. Homesick, grief-stricken about their dead comrades and horrified by massacres, they are also the victims of administrative incompetence. The enemy rarely appears, and when he does he's depicted as a fellow unfortunate. In comic books of this kind, the conflict is not a horizontal one between two parties but a vertical one, with a hierarchy obliging the soldiers to defend interests that are not their own.

One example is a 1987 American series called *The 'Nam* (Viet Nam), whose authors, Michael Golden and Doug Murray, presented a detailed and realistic picture of the Viet Nam War. They told the story of a group of U.S. marines who didn't really understand why the war began or what they were fighting for, and who tried to get through it by making friends with each other. More recently, *Sarajevo-Tango* (1996), by the Belgian cartoonist Hermann, revived the argument about getting involved in a war like the one in Bosnia, where ethnic cleansing happened because of the feeble diplomatic efforts of the United Nations and the Western powers.

The most violent comic strips are nearly always fantasies, with few historical references. It is as if fantasy can soften the cruelty of the scenes or at least set them in a fictional context where there are fewer ethical requirements. But when strips have a historical conflict as a backdrop, authors these days are extremely critical. Even when the story is set in the midst of a conflict, authors like the Slovene Tomas Lavric in his "Tales of Bosnia" (1997) avoid warlike postures. Lavric recounts how, despite the war, everyday life goes on, with children playing amid the snipers, old people looking for pigeons to feed, politicians putting their personal interests first and journalists trying to exploit the media possibilities of disaster. The message is that in general, war should always be condemned, whatever its causes or aims.

© Jacques Tardi, *C'était la guerre des tranchées* 1982 Editions Casterman, Tournai, Belgium

The comic strip author who has gone deepest into the causes and effects of war is the Frenchman Jacques Tardi. In his comic book C'était la guerre des tranchées ("Trench warfare", 1982), about the First World War, he deals bluntly with the stupidity of a civilian population which was swept along by a tide of patriotic fervour and supported the fighting, and with the agony of a soldier living in a hell of blood and mud in the trenches. He shows the horror unleashed by officers who did not hesitate to sacrifice thousands of men in the name of an absurd sense of honour. In this context, German soldiers are victims too. The only possible outcome is trauma, desertion or death.

Over the years, this kind of one-sided comic strip, typical of the 1940s and 1950s, has run out of steam. Comic books have freed themselves from the burden of propaganda and have become more critical or analytical of people's behaviour.

They no longer rely exclusively on the glorification of good guys and condemnation of baddies. With the more relaxed international atmosphere of recent years and as the old conflicts fade into history, "classic" war comic books are now rare. A new readership has emerged, with a new outlook dominated by a pacifist culture

The historical accuracy of the comic books cited here, along with others such as *La guerra civil española* ("The Spanish Civil War", 1978) by Antonio Hernández Palacios, provides a reliable and congenial basis for studying history in schools. Palacios's four-part series is scrupulously ▸

► documented. Through the lives of two young men, Eloy and Gorka, readers can see a faithful depiction of the main actors in the war, a reconstruction of some of the major battles, the reasons for many troop movements, and especially the circumstances, the countryside, the dress and the everyday objects used in a Spain mired in poverty, where no holds were barred in the struggle to survive constant danger.

Classroom exercises

The opportunity to draw lessons from these comic books arises not so much from the pictorial reconstruction of the conflict as from their approach and the way problems are presented. Soldiers handle weapons, but ideas justify what they do. The authors present a wide range of opinions which can be analysed and assessed in the classroom. One exercise could involve asking the children to explain why the characters in the comic strip behave as they do and to compare each side's motives with those of their adversaries. The children could then go on to discuss whether these differences were worth fighting over.

Of course, such situations can only be explained in a historical context. It might also be useful to make the victors and the defeated switch sides so as to see, by reshuffling the plot and the outcome, those elements of the dramatic structure that might justify the victory of one side or the other.

Analysing this kind of comic book might help vaccinate the world against future warlike impulses. Comic strips could help us to stay alert and prevent the monster of violence from waking up once again. ■

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Comic strips produced in a number of countries present a biased version of conflicts. One notable example can be found in Chinese comic books of the 1950s and 1960s. With huge print runs and wide distribution, they spread a deceptive view of communist war and revolution

ADVENTURE AND PROPAGANDA

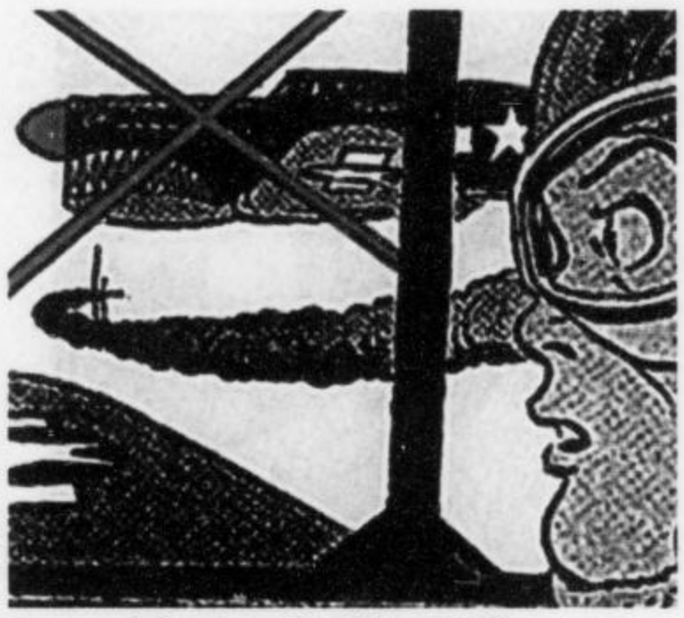
"Terry and the Pirates", the cartoon strip the American artist Milton Caniff (1907-1988) began to draw in 1934, describes the adventures of a little boy who travels the rivers and seas of China fighting pirates and other rogues who are plundering the region. The main attraction of these adventure tales is the exotic nature of the settings and the people living in them. When Japan occupies China, Terry and his friends turn to fighting invaders who are not explicitly named.

The story-line changes sharply in 1942 when the United States comes into the war after the bombing of Pearl Harbour. Terry signs up at the Chinese air cadets' academy and starts wearing a U.S. military uniform. From now on, his only enemy is the Japanese army and its many allies. Oddly though, despite the change of enemy, the strip kept its old title.

The enemy are no longer pirates but a regular army. Yet the way problems are presented, the way people behave and the outcome of situations are virtually unchanged. The Japanese officers and soldiers are shown with the usual characteristics of an enemy–not only in their physical appearance but in their lack of moral scruples. Terry and his friends hardly change either when they join the army. They continue hand-to-hand fighting and stay within the law and above all respect ethical principles.

The simplistic, all-or-nothing depiction of the opposing armies is not due to the causes being fought for or the historical context but to the different roles the characters play. These are people who, by their behaviour, justify or debase the cause of the country they represent. History has entered the comic strip and adopted its stereotypes. Although they wear the uniform of the imperial army, the Japanese remain pirates, an emanation of the evil that the hero must continue to fight.

Most war comics published in the 1940s and 1950s are based on this allocation of roles. During these years of patriotic fervour, many comic strip characters enrolled in the army, including Captain America and Mickey Mouse, and fought against the Axis forces. The same thing happened in the 1960s with the Viet Nam War, in strips like *Tales of the Green Beret* (1966) by Robin Moore and Joe Kubert. ■



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***Terry and the pirates* by Milton Caniff.**

MORSE: THE END OF AN ERA?

Tony Smith

A world information highway built as a result of the 19th-century century communications revolution came to the end of the road at the beginning of this year. Or did it?

From midnight, January 31, 1999, international regulations no longer require ships at sea to be equipped to call for help in an emergency using Morse code and the well-known SOS signal. On February 1, the Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS), using satellite and other high-tech communication techniques, replaced a system which since the early part of this century has saved countless ships and thousands of lives.

GMDSS has been developed and progressively implemented since 1979. As more and more ships adopted the new system, coastal radio stations around the world have been closing down their wireless telegraphy (W/T) services as demand has decreased.

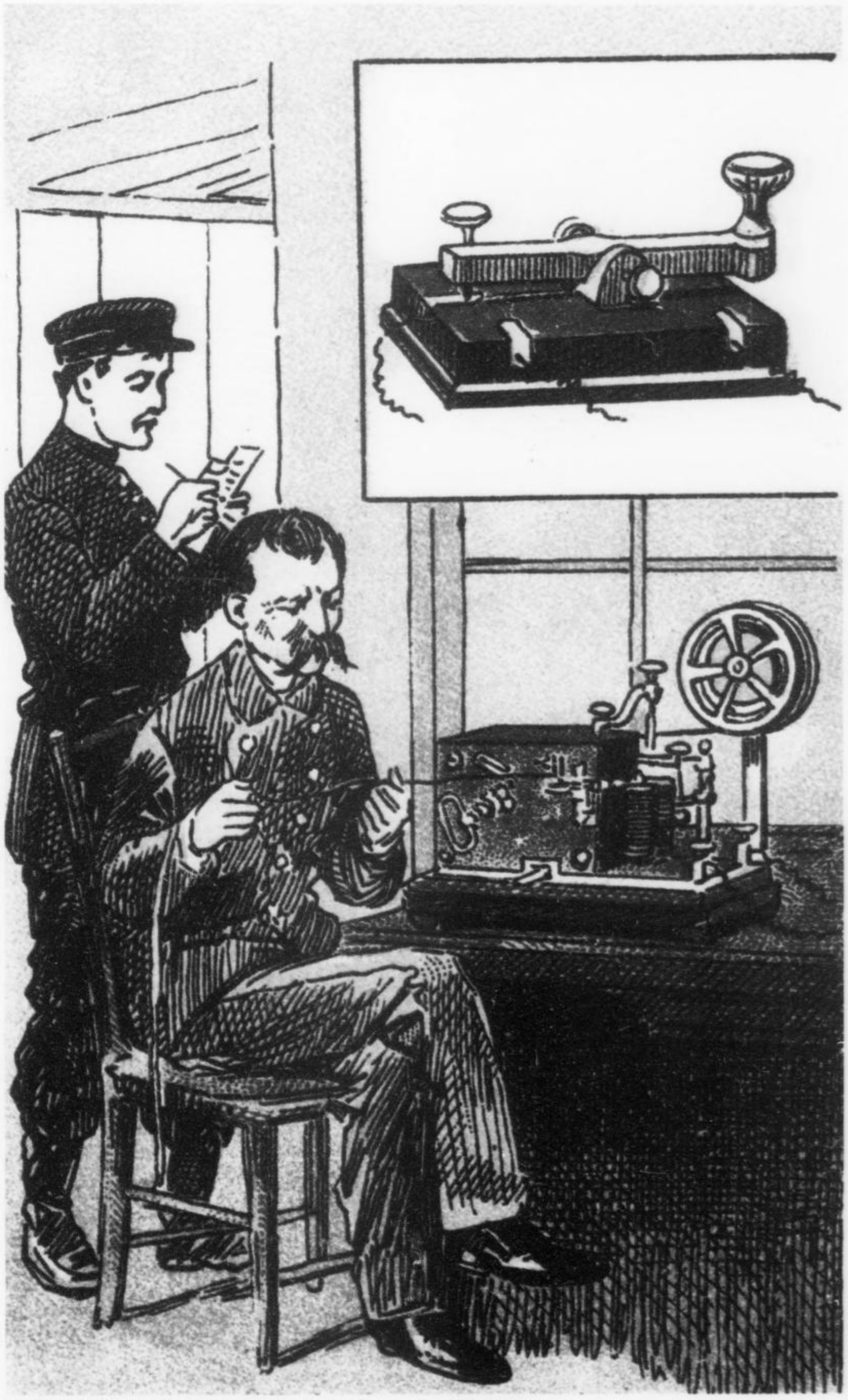
As midnight approached on January 31, many of the remaining stations sent their final Morse signals in a profusion of emotional messages, typical of which was this from a group of Danish stations: "Concluding an era of more than 90 years of W/T service from Danish coast stations, starting in 1909. . . . This is the last transmission for ever."

Thus signed off with dots and dashes the era of Morse telegraphy, a medium which in the 19th century had created a revolution in world communications, serving virtually every aspect of human activity: government, diplomacy, business, industry, railways, newspapers, military, and more, plus the needs of ordinary people who wished to send telegrams.

'What Hath God Wrought!'

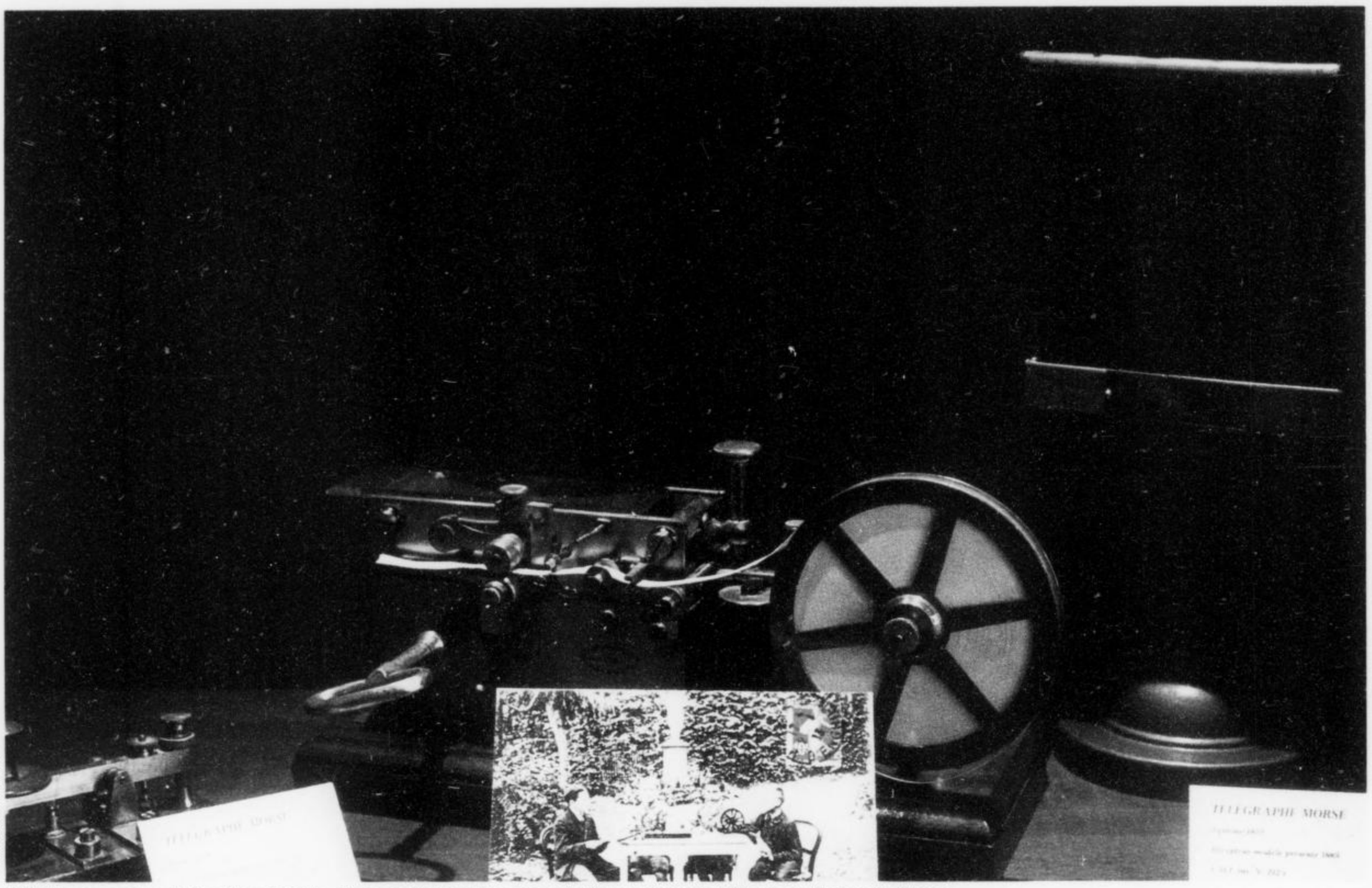
Following the Italian physicist Alessandro Volta's invention of the voltaic pile in 1800, the first means of storing electricity, there was an upsurge of electrical experimentation, including many attempts to achieve communication between distant points using electricity and metal wires. In 1832, Samuel F.B. Morse, a well-known American artist, conceived the idea of an electromagnetic ►

Consultant Editor of *Morsum Magnificat*, an international magazine devoted to Morse telegraphy.



c J.-L. Charmet, Paris

By the end of the 19th century, Morse telegraphy was in widespread use.



© Alain Buu/Gamma, Paris

This Morse receiver dating from 1889 is displayed in the telecommunications museum at Pleumeur-Bodou, in France.

► instrument to achieve this by means of interrupted electrical currents corresponding to a prearranged code (see box).

In 1843, Congress allocated $30,000 to test his invention on a 40-mile (65-km) line along the railroad from Washington to Baltimore. This opened on May 24, 1844, with the sending of the apposite phrase "What Hath God Wrought!", and within a year private companies came into being with plans to run Morse lines to all parts of America.

In 1866, after several earlier attempts, a submarine cable linked Britain and America. By 1871 a cable had reached Australia, and well before the turn of the century most of the world was covered by a vast network of Morse lines.

A new industry

The Morse telegraph created an entirely new industry which, amongst other things, offered women for the first time an opportunity to take up a respectable career, that of a telegrapher, outside their own homes. Telegrams became a way of life for business and for individuals, and many large organizations had their own telegraph offices.

In 1848, six New York newspapers formed the Associated Press, sharing news-gathering and telegraphic services. They hired their own lines and operating staff, and by 1923 AP landlines across North America totalled 92,000 miles (148,000 km) serving the interests of 1,207 member newspapers.

Many famous people started their careers in the telegraph industry. Thomas Edison, the famous inventor, was an itinerant Morse telegrapher at the age of 17, travelling thousands of miles throughout the United States and Canada, taking job after job as his fancy, or circumstances, dictated.

Andrew Carnegie, the industrialist and philanthropist, began as a messenger boy and was a telegraphist for twelve years. Gene Autry, "the singing cowboy", who

HOW IT WORKED

In its simplest form, each of two telegraph stations has a Morse key, in effect a simple electrical switch; a battery; and an electromagnetic receiving instrument called a "sounder". The two stations, which could be a few or many miles apart, are linked by a single wire strung on telegraph poles. A second wire is connected to the ground at each station and the earth completes the electrical circuit.

When the key in one station is held down, electricity passes along the line to activate the magnets in the sounder in the other station. A hinged bar in the sounder is pulled down towards the magnets, making a loud click as it comes to the end of its movement. Releasing the key switches off the magnets and the sounder's bar is pulled up by a spring to make yet another click.

Depressing the key for a brief moment (a dot) results in two clicks close together. Holding the key down for a longer period (a dash) creates two clicks further apart. A telegraph operator learned to distinguish between the dots and dashes sent in this way and thus read the Morse code.

The code received was transcribed manually with pen and paper. Subsequent improvements in speed and capacity were achieved by the invention of the typewriter, which dramatically increased receiving capability; and a semi-automatic Morse key which greatly increased the sending speed of manual Morse.

The greatest capital expense was the cost of erecting poles and wires hundreds of miles across country to carry telegraphic traffic. In 1876 Thomas Edison invented a "quadruplex" system enabling a single wire to carry up to two messages in one direction and another two in the opposite direction simultaneously. This created extra "lines" which did not have to be physically built. Automatic high-speed sending and receiving machines further increased the carrying capacity of existing lines. ■

died in 1998 aged 91, was a railroad telegrapher in his youth before he became a Hollywood star.

In the early days of broadcasting, a telegrapher accompanied American commentators to sporting events, and special lines were installed to connect the stadium to the radio station. The telegrapher sent short reports to the station describing the progress of the match, and a "sportscaster" used them to provide a "live" commentary on the game as if he were there personally. One broadcaster who worked in this way in the 1930s was Ronald Reagan, later President of the United States.

A universal code

The code used on the American lines was "American Morse", which is not the same as the international code we know today. The first Morse line in Europe was between Hamburg and Cuxhaven in 1847, but the American code was not entirely suitable for the German language with its diacritical letters. A new extended code was therefore devised, including some new characters and some retained from the American code.

As the telegraph spread to other German states and to Austria, each state devised its own variation of the Morse code, necessitating telegraphic translation to a different code by an operator as messages crossed state boundaries.

In 1851 the Austro-Germanic Telegraph Union adopted a slightly amended version of the 1847 code for use in all states as part of a unified telegraph system effective from July 1, 1852. The new code spread to other European countries and was finally adopted for universal use in 1865 by the newly formed International Telegraph Union.

Later, some countries developed their own versions of the code for internal communications. Apart from the original American Morse, which remained in use within the United States, there are Arabic, Burmese, Chinese, Greek, Hebrew, Japanese, Korean, Russian, and Turkish Morse codes, and possibly more.

The European code, which finally became the international Morse code, was the chosen communication mode for the newly invented wireless at the end of the 19th century.

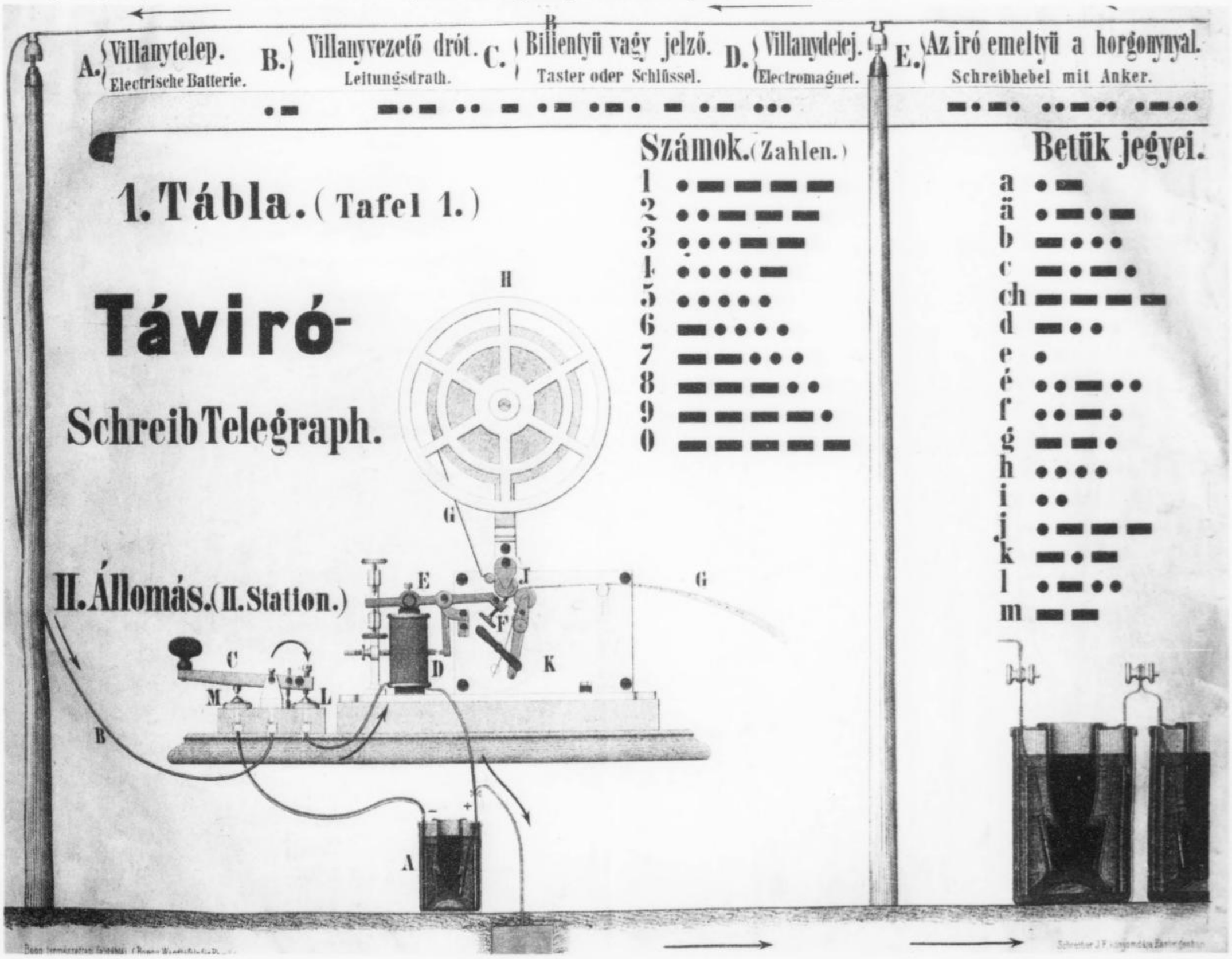
A good practical system of signalling already existed between stations using metal wires to carry their signals. The purpose of early wireless was simply to replicate and extend the scope of the Morse telegraph without the need for wires between stations. When wireless was found to be capable of sending messages over great distances it was adapted for use by ships at sea which previously had no means of communication with land, or each other, except by visual signalling when close-by.

Inspiration for wireless

The most famous early use of Morse at sea was when the *Titanic* struck an iceberg and sank on the night of April 14, 1912. Her two Radio Officers, Jack Phillips and Harold Bride, stayed by their radio until the last moment, sending out CQD SOS messages in Morse code calling other ships to their rescue. "CQD" was a recognized maritime distress signal, and "SOS" was a new international signal due to replace it shortly.

Their calls were heard 58 miles (93 km) away by the *Carpathia*, which arrived on the scene an hour and twenty minutes after ▸

A Hungarian plate printed at the end of the 19th century shows the beginning of the Morse alphabet and numerals.



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▶ the *Titanic* sank and rescued some 700 survivors. Over 1,500 people died in the tragedy, including Jack Phillips. Bride survived and although unable to walk or stand, spent much of the time over the next four days heroically helping the radio officer of the *Carpathia* send a continuous stream of messages from the surviving passengers to their next of kin.

Military use

Morse telegraphy was used by military forces in the Crimean War, and in the American Civil War. In the First World War, it was widely employed in trench warfare with buzzers replacing sounders. At the same time early wireless telegraphy sets were coming into use.

By the time of the Second World War, although wired telegraphy was still used, wireless had become the preferred form of military communication. It was also an essential part of clandestine/intelligence operations, particularly in occupied Europe where Allied agents risked detection, and their lives, every time they transmitted a message to London. Morse by radio also served as a vital communications link for the greatly increased use of aircraft in wartime operations.

In most armed forces today Morse is no longer taught as a standard form of communication, although some operators still learn it as a special skill. In a recent unusual application, Sudan People's Liberation Army rebels fighting the government of Sudan have been heard on shortwave radio, without Morse keys, vocalizing the code as "dits" and "dahs" into microphones.

IDENTIFYING OPERATORS BY THEIR 'FINGERPRINTS'

When Morse is sent by hand, every operator has his or her own characteristics in the shape of slight variations in the lengths of dots and dashes and spacing between letters and words. Slight as they are, when a Morse operator regularly "works" another operator, it becomes quite easy to recognize the style or "fist" of the other.

In the Second World War, the differences in the sending styles of secret agents were noted by their home stations so that if they were captured false messages emanating from the enemy could easily be detected. The styles of operators on enemy submarines, ships or military units were also identified to help track their movements on a day-to-day basis. ■

Not quite the end

The invention of radio signalled the beginning of the end for landline Morse, but it took a long time to happen. While long-distance radio services challenged the cable companies, the advent of the teleprinter took a more immediate effect. Britain's Post Office officially abandoned Morse in 1932, although its use continued in the United States and Australia until the 1960s.

The same process took place in other countries although from time to time unconfirmed reports indicate that landline Morse still survives in Mexico and India.

Morse at sea has officially ceased, but it has not yet disappeared. Some stations and ships are still actively carrying Morse traffic, mostly in the developing world, but some European stations can also be heard. The high cost of installing new equipment in the ships is the main reason for the delay in changing to GMDSS, but also training facilities have not been able to keep up with demand.

There is still one major user of Morse code. Radio amateurs worldwide use it to communicate with each other because of two advantages. It has an internationally understood system of abbreviations which aids communication between people who are unfamiliar with each other's language; and Morse radio transmission is a particularly effective means of getting signals to distant places compared with other radio modes—the same advantages that made it so valuable for maritime use.

Landline Morse is also kept alive by hobbyists. In America, Canada and Australia, enthusiasts mount historical displays and communicate with each other using original keys and sounders via the public telephone system, dial-up units, and modems. ■

● The Internet contains a vast amount of information about Morse telegraphy. A useful start can be made at http://www.morsum.demon.co.uk/links.html

The first attempt to lay a transatlantic submarine telegraph cable. Valencia island (Ireland), 1857. (Contemporary engraving).

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OSWALDO DE RIVERO: DEBUNKING THE MYTHS OF 'DEVELOPMENT'

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In a recent book *El mito del desarrollo* ('The Myth of Development'), Peruvian diplomat Oswaldo de Rivero warns that many national economies will become non-viable in the 21st century and analyses the failure of current development theories which, he says, are taking the world down a blind alley.

You say that the development model which has been proposed as a panacea for more than half a century is leading nowhere. Why?

Economic development is one of the great myths of the 20th century. In the 1970s, people firmly believed Brazil would conquer poverty and become a world power. The same thing was said about India, Mexico and many other countries. But the fact is that on the eve of the 21st century, more than 100 countries have not developed, and only three have managed to make a breakthrough—South Korea, Taiwan and Singapore, representing less than 2 per cent of the population of the so-called "developing world".

Development in general, which has been tried through socialism and is now being tried through capitalism, has not happened. For the poor countries, the choice is no longer about how to develop but about how to simply survive the challenges of the technological revolution and darwinist global competition.

But some world indicators, e.g. for life expectancy and infant mortality, are improving. . .

The fact is that in the year 2000 about 1.5 billion people will be living in poverty on less than a dollar a day and 2.3 billion on less than two dollars a day, and that in nearly 100 countries real per capita income has not increased for 15 years. The World Bank's dollar-a-day poverty line and the UN Development Programme's Human Development Index show the enormous extent of poverty in the inappropriately-named developing world. The existence of vast numbers of people living in a state of deprivation with such low purchasing power means that their countries are "quasi-nations", unable to carry out any national project and to be part of the global economy.

You think many countries are or will soon be "non-viable national economies" or, even worse, "ungovernable chaotic entities". Why?

Most of these countries suffer from what I call "the virus of economic non-viability"—explosive urban population growth and production which is focused on raw materials at a time when the technological revolution needs less and less of them. The convergence of these two trends dramatically hinders development and creates a structural deadlock which leads countries so afflicted to "stabilize" the non-viability of their economies. Not all non-viable economies collapse. Countries with the strongest population growth and the least ability to survive are the ones that break down into "ungovernable chaotic entities" (UCEs).

What are these UCEs like?

Basically the government loses control over large segments of its territory and population. In such economically non-viable countries, poor income distribution, spiralling population growth and technological backwardness lead to social exclusion, which in turn stirs up ethnic, ideological and religious animosity. Large areas of the country fall under the control of warlords, drug traffickers, ideologically motivated guerrillas or a mixture of all three. So chaos grows, civil society virtually disappears and the population becomes dependent on the Red Cross or Doctors without Borders. The country is in a state of permanent destabilization. This what I call an "ungovernable chaotic entity".

Could you give us some examples?

UCEs are in a constant state of internal violence, where fighting alternates with truces, as, regrettably, we have seen in Angola, Sierra Leone, Afghanistan, Somalia, Liberia, Cambodia, Rwanda, Burundi, Bosnia, Chechnya, Haiti, Albania and Colombia.

Does this only happen in the countries of the South?

There are policies which create exclusion in some rich countries of the North. In several U.S. cities, there are neighbourhoods which seem as if they've been transplanted from the Third World. There's also exclusion in France. But these countries don't become UCEs ▶

▶ because the state hasn't lost control of the territory. Right now, Russia is the only country that can be called developed—because it belongs to the G8 group of countries—where there are signs that the central government is disintegrating.

Apart from their economies, does anything else make countries of the South non-viable?

Yes, and this is something I want to look at in a future book. I think non-development and non-viability also stem from a cultural problem. In these countries—and I'll talk about Latin America because that's what I know best—personal relationships are more important than the rational approach to problems which you find in Europe. Also, Latin America's a traditional society, without a capitalist spirit of enterprise or an inventive scientific community. Its culture is not based on science, but on literature, painting and music. That can be an advantage, but development cannot take place in a capitalist economy without a scientific inclination and Latin America doesn't have that. In Brazil, Argentina and Peru, liberalizing the economy won't automatically sprout a lot of inventors and managers like Bill Gates. These countries must find other ways to develop. They're not going to manage it by adopting the U.S. model because they don't have the same cultural roots.

You say the coincidence of the technological revolution and the urban explosion is one of the main reasons why development is impossible. Why?

Today's technological revolution triggers off a process of natural selection which leaves by the wayside thousands of unskilled people and tons of raw materials at the very moment when an urban demographic explosion is occurring in most poor countries. The United Nations and the International Labour Organisation (ILO) reckon that if the population of these nations keeps on growing, about a billion new jobs will be needed at the beginning of the next century. How can jobs be found for so many people with the new technologies? The technological revolution and the urban explosion are therefore on a collision course.

But these two phenomena are virtually inevitable. So what can be done?

I don't think there's an easy remedy and that's what shocks people about my book. You're not going to get a solution while the urban population keeps growing in the world's developing countries. In the meantime, there'll have to be social welfare subsidies and programmes to fight poverty and create jobs. This isn't going to solve the problem, but at least it will limit the damage.

Reality vs consumer dreams: in Pakistan, a man goes about his daily tasks, heedless of the advertising billboards above.

© Chris Stowers/Panos Pictures, London

Will this situation last forever?

It doesn't matter if it lasts 100 years. Things will only change when the world's birthrate falls, which is expected to happen sometime around 2050, but until then there'll be tremendous social and political upheavals in the world. Human beings only learn through experiencing disaster, not through reason or theories. People feel compassion about Third World poverty, but they don't realize the damage that's being done. When serious disturbances break out, not just ecological ones but political and social disturbances which also affect rich countries, then maybe we'll start thinking about a new system of co-operation.

You say that if globalization closes the gap between rich and poor countries, the result will be ecological disaster. So is there any way out at all?

The model of consumption in rich countries isn't viable for them either in the long term. Yet they're trying to pass on the pattern of consumption of about a billion

people to almost five billion inhabitants of underdeveloped countries. The irony is that unemployment, poverty and exclusion prevent such patterns from being adopted. If they were adopted, five billion credit cards would soon destroy the planet's biosphere. There won't be any solution until all humanity reduces its level of consumption and income is better shared out by a system of international co-operation.

In your view, the structural adjustment programmes of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund have not worked. Has the cure been worse than the disease?

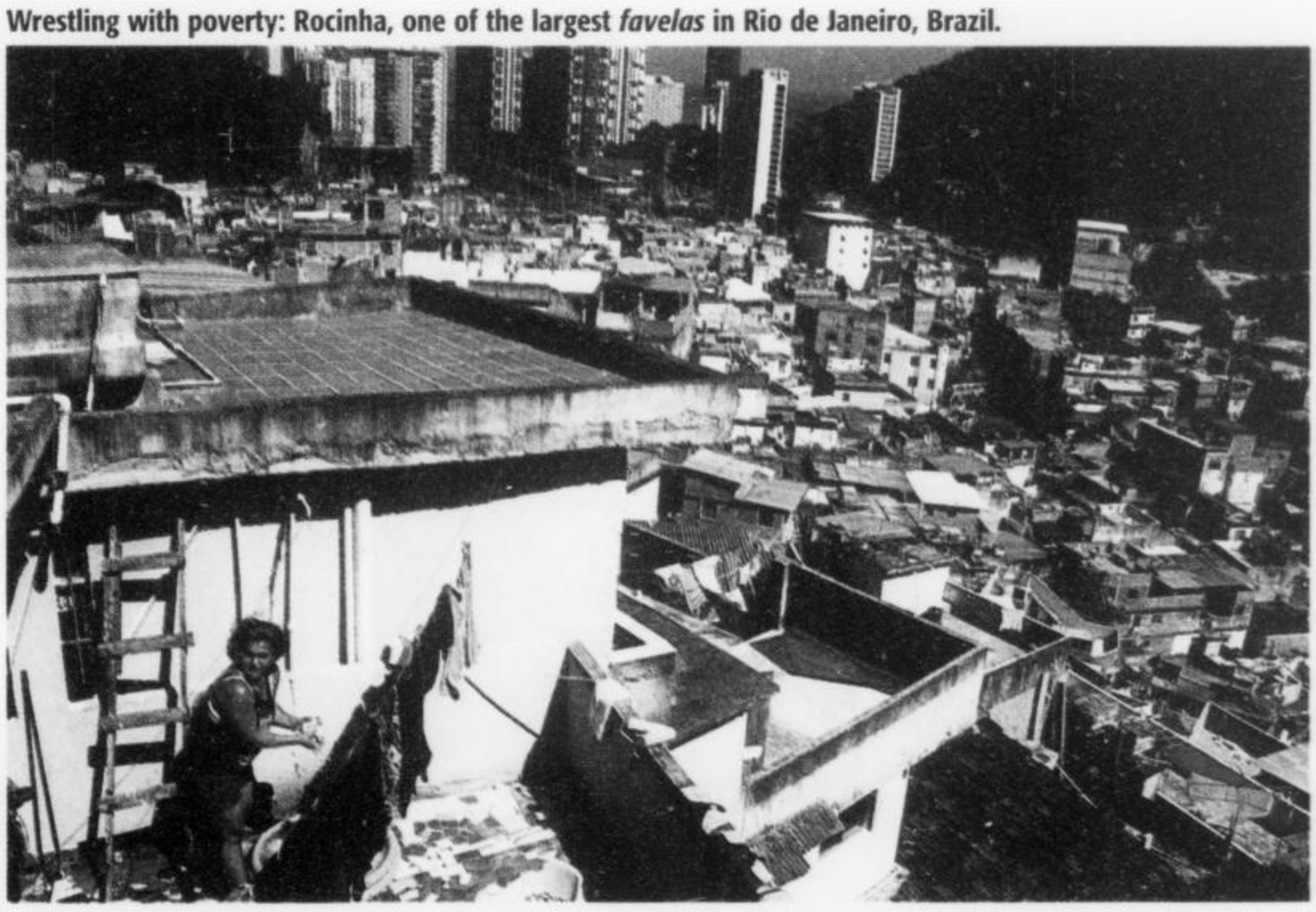
In the long term, yes. In the short term, they've managed to stabilize the macro-economy and curb inflation. But they've failed in the long term because they haven't laid the foundations for capitalist development in those countries. They adjusted production but didn't modernize it. The neo-liberal development theory says once countries have liberalized their economies, they must produce goods on the basis of the comparative advantages they enjoy on the world market. But the only comparative advantage these countries have is their raw materials. The world economy is demanding more and more goods and services with high technological content, but the underdeveloped economies are still exporting relatively untransformed raw materials and products with low technological input.

Why has this failure been so resounding in Africa?

African economies have specialized in exporting bananas, cocoa, minerals and tropical products which, together with the population explosion, is a deadly trap. The continent is the best example of what I call the conjunction of two "viruses of non-development"—the population explosion and the production of raw materials.

These days, the future of many economies and national cultures is not decided in government ministries or parliaments but on the international financial markets

Wrestling with poverty: Rocinha, one of the largest *favelas* in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.



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AN UNDIPLOMATIC DIPLOMAT

"We must dare to think the unthinkable," says Oswaldo de Rivero in his book *El Mito del Desarrollo* ("The Myth of Development"),[1] which has had a big impact in Latin America and will soon be published in English. He argues that development does not exist, or at least not as we have understood it for the past half-century.

De Rivero is a former Peruvian diplomat who was born in Lima in 1936. He is neither a university professor nor a government spokesman. His opinions are based on a profound knowledge of the international scene acquired during more than 20 years' experience in a broad range of international forums.

He has represented his country at the United Nations General Assembly and on the Security Council; he is a former ambassador to the United Kingdom and Russia, president of the Economic Commission of the Non-Aligned Countries' summit, president of the Group of 77 countries and chairman of the council of the Latin American Economic System (SELA), a regional intergovernmental body set up to encourage co-operation and integration among Latin American and Caribbean countries. He has also been president of the World Conference on Nuclear Non-Proliferation and the United Nations Disarmament Conference and led the Peruvian delegation during the Uruguay Round of GATT world trade negotiations.

A lawyer with a degree from the Catholic University of Lima, de Rivero abandoned his diplomatic career because of "a profound disagreement with the present Peruvian government". Today he lives in Geneva, where he works as a United Nations consultant, contributes to the Peruvian daily newspaper *La República*, and is currently writing a new book. ■

1 Mosca Azul editores, Lima, 1998.

IMF and World Bank officials are obsessed with the complete deregulation of the economy, when the real problem of underdeveloped countries is historical and cultural: their lack of a capitalist spirit and a scientific tradition to modernize their production.

Do you see any chance of African countries being able to reverse this trend?

For the moment, no, none at all.

You regard development aid as a kind of "Mother Teresa policy". What do you propose in its place?

International aid is, paradoxically, the most striking indication of non-development. It won't solve the problem. But at least we have to set up systems of international co-operation and not treat countries as equals when they're not. Ghana, for example, can't compete with the United States in the global market. Special rules must be set up for developing countries. Such rules used to exist, but they've all been dismantled.

You propose setting up a transnational ecological system. What would it be like?

Ecological problems will sooner or later put a brake on the expansion of high-consumption capitalism which is using nature as a raw material and slowly eating it up. The United Nations isn't tackling the problem very well because it can't do so without the help of the transnational companies, for it is they ▶

▶ who are doing the producing and developing both dirty technologies and green technologies. These firms must be represented in a tripartite international body in which governments, transnationals and civil society are represented. A solution can only be based on negotiations between the real players.

How powerful are the transnationals?

The rationale of globalization has spawned a new faceless non-governmental economic aristocracy—the transnationals. These days, the future of many economies and national cultures is not decided in government ministries or parliaments but on the international financial markets. Only 10 industrialized countries export more than the world's 10 richest companies. Yet the World Trade Organization discusses international trade problems without these companies. At the Rio Earth Summit, countless plans and measures to protect the environment were put forward, none of which have come to fruition because the companies responsible for the environmental damage made no commitment to them. The trouble is that the transnationals have more and more power but no global responsibility.

How can we get them to assume these responsibilities?

It's clear that international institutions no longer reflect the new world power structure. We can't go on having diplomatic get-togethers between representatives of governments without any real power to alter global economic and ecological trends. Let's start by giving the transnationals a place and a vote in international bodies, because nothing can be done without them.

This doesn't guarantee they'll change their attitude.

It won't be easy to change their policies since the transnationals are very shrewd and choosy about how and where they invest. What might change their attitude is the fact that if globalization continues to create exclusion, they'll have to start investing in poor countries to create markets there. But they've already got an enormous potential market anyway. The opening up of the Chinese economy brings the transnationals 300 million consumers, the equivalent of the American market. India brings in another 150 million people with real purchasing power. So there are still new markets to be won. . . . And so the process will be a long one.

So what can the worst-off countries be offered?

Many countries which only produce raw materials and have a rapidly-growing urban population are having to wrestle with shortages of water, energy and food. To cope with these problems, what I call a "national survival pact" is needed, because without water, food and energy there can be no state or civilized life and no society that can develop. This is the situation in countries like Guatemala, Peru and Bolivia in Latin America, and Bangladesh, India and even China, in Asia.

What does this "survival pact" involve?

A minimum level of development is impossible without energy, water and

Children of war in El Salvador.

© James Nachtwey/Magnum, Paris

A MYTH IN FIGURES

"Some truths are unpleasant, but they're still truths," says Oswaldo de Rivero. Here are some of them, extracted from his book.

World poverty. In the year 2020, there will be 3 billion poor people in the developing countries, of whom more than 800 million will be hungry and hundreds of millions will be unemployed or under-employed.

Transnational companies. About 38,000 transnational firms and their subsidiaries account for two-thirds of world trade. The sales of the 86 most powerful transnationals exceed the value of the exports of almost every country in the world.

Financial markets. The international financial market is a huge casino which handles a trillion dollars' worth of transactions every day–nearly six times more than total direct foreign investment world-wide in one year.

Inequalities. The annual income of the world's 358 richest people is greater than the total income of 2.3 billion other people–that is, 45% of the world's population.

Food. Almost 800 million people in sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia, Central America and the Andean countries have no food security.

Water. Half the population of the developing countries do not have enough water. Illnesses related to water pollution kill 25,000 people every day.

Energy. Low per capita consumption of oil fuel plus population growth make a country economically non-viable. High per capita oil consumption in every country would make the civilization non-viable.

Africa. A total of 162 structural adjustment programmes have been implemented in Africa (compared with 126 in the rest of the world) since 1982, reinforcing Africa's role as an exporter of raw materials and basic products. After 20 years of this regime, Africa starts the next millennium with national economies which are severely handicapped in the world economic system.

Raw materials. At the end of the century, the amount of raw material per unit of industrial production is two-fifths less than in 1930. Japan has reduced its consumption of raw materials by 40% compared with 1973. World demand for high tech products is growing by 15% every year, while the demand for raw materials is growing by less than 3%. In real terms, prices of raw materials will continue to fall at least until the middle of the next century. ■

© M. Rio Branco/Magnum, Paris

"In the 1970s, people firmly believed Brazil would conquer poverty." Above, Brazilian miners carrying bags weighing up to 60 kilos.

food. How can you educate a child who hasn't been properly fed, how can you industrialize a city without water, how can public utilities work without electricity? A national survival pact involves seeking secure supplies of energy, water and food because without them no development plan can work. But these days there are no development plans, there's only the market. It is thought, absurdly, that the market will produce development. But that has never happened. All the developed countries emerged thanks to protectionist trade policies. It's impossible for a country to switch from exporting cotton to producing computer chips as a result of the invisible hand of the market. Such a country will need to have an industrialization policy and take protectionist measures, at least temporarily, in order to develop.

Is there anything constructive about globalization?

The globalization of communications is good for the cultural exchanges and contacts it makes possible and because it fosters a global awareness of human problems and suffering. It's also positive at a political level—here I'm thinking particularly of how these days we keep track of governments that violate human rights.

But in economic matters, globalization imposes a monolithic doctrine. It sells us a development model that is non-viable. Instead of creating a "global village", it creates a worldwide collection of gated communities of wealthy, elegant people who share the same lifestyle and pattern of consumption, and destroy the environment. Behind these ghettos, there are shanty-towns, slums and suburbs where water, energy and food are scarce, and crime, unemployment, violence and pollution are rife.

It is thought, absurdly, that the market will produce development. But that has never happened. All the developed countries emerged thanks to protectionist trade policies

Why do you think your book made such an impact in Latin America?

I think it was successful because a new awareness is emerging. A large part of Latin America's political class has supported the single neo-liberal development model, but people are starting to have doubts about it. The book came out just after the big economic crises in Asia, Russia and Brazil. If it had come out before, I would have been called pessimistic or crazy. When I had finished the book, people asked me how I was going to publish it when Buenos Aires is full of Mercedes cars and there are dozens of shopping centres in Santiago de Chile and Lima. But all that's just a façade. Of course, if you go to Caracas, Buenos Aires or Rio and stay in the hotel where World Bank officials stay, you'll get the false impression everything's fine. But if you venture just a short distance away, you'll see there are really two countries in one.

So do we have to give up the idea of development because it's a kind of suspect ideology?

I'm not against the market economy and I don't say that capitalist development ▶

▶ shouldn't exist. But the laws of the market are not natural laws. The market can be regulated and geared to making people happy. We can't use it like the law of gravity and say that those who stumble should fall, that those who aren't competitive should die. That's economic darwinism. What's missing really is a moral revolution. The problem is ethical, profoundly ethical and cultural. We've had a technological revolution, but we haven't had an ethical revolution.

What would you say to a 20-year-old living in a developing country?

It depends on which social class they belong to. If they're from a rich family, they'll have no problems, except the risk of being kidnapped. If they're middle class, they'll have to be realistic and stop thinking that when they graduate from university they're going to find a job, start a family and live well. I wouldn't dare to say anything to a poor person, because in underdeveloped countries the poor live in hell, the middle class in purgatory and a group surrounded by bodyguards lives in the paradise of global consumption. But at what cost and with what burden of fear? A society can neither live like this nor go forward. Sooner or later, that youth of 20 will have to get down to the business of changing the world's only system of development because it works against him.

And to a young person in an industrialized country, what would you say?

The consumer society inoculates people against compassion. I'd tell those young people to get "dis-inoculated" because the way the world's going, their children and grandchildren are going to suffer. A predatory attitude has been encouraged in human beings, that the strongest win, consume and then forget. I think lots of young people are aware of this problem. But most of them live a life of instant gratification in a sort of moral vacuum and don't see any connection between their own well-being and people dying in Africa.

Isn't your attitude over-pessimistic?

I think we have to see things straight. That's why I talked about a national survival pact. Development technocrats have come up with highly complex plans, from education to steel production, but the basics have been forgotten: population growth, lack of food, energy and water. Big countries with nuclear weapons, like India, Pakistan and China, have serious water supply problems and have to import food and energy. They're giants with feet of clay. That isn't development. I am sending out an alarm signal to alert the poor countries against being hypnotized by a mirage—the mirage of the technological development that exists in the United States and Europe and is virtually impossible for them to achieve. These countries must take survival measures, because otherwise there will be no stable societies. You can't have health without water, production without energy, or life without food. My book is an appeal for the poor countries to concentrate on these essentials. This is what must be done and done properly. ■

Interview by Araceli Ortiz de Urbina and Lucía Iglesias Kuntz

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- Towards a new eugenics?
- Religious perspectives on genetic engineering
- United States: made-to-measure babies
- China's state-sanctioned selection
- India: screening out girls
- The United Kingdom: cloning in Dolly's footsteps
- Germany: laying old ghosts to rest

Features include:

- Life at 20 in today's Cuba
- Refugee education: learning from experience
- Maladies of the 21st century
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